

# Farndon

## Neighbourhood Development Plan

Five Year Review



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## Attachments

## **1. Introduction**

In March 2012, Farndon Parish Council took the opportunity afforded by the Localism Act (2011) and the Cheshire West and Chester Council Local Plan (2012) to consult residents of the parish and prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for the 20-year period 2010 to 2030.

The Plan was published in 2017 – having been delayed by substantial changes to and within Farndon Parish during the consultation period – and was approved by a referendum of Farndon residents on 22 February 2018 and thereby passed into law.

Since 2015, Farndon Parish has increased in size by approximately 41% and the Parish Council decided to gauge the current validity of and support for, the Plan by conducting a five year review as provided for in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

The review, originally planned for February 2020 was delayed until April 2021 because of the Covid 19 pandemic. The consultation was launched on 29 April 2021 and covered the six-week period up to 14 June 2021.

The Parish Council was especially concerned that, despite the limitations necessitated by Covid 19, all residents were informed and consulted throughout. A publicity programme started with a series of four information posters displayed around Farndon in local shops and the Post Office, on Parish Council and school noticeboards, Rock Chapel and the Community Club and on village web-pages including Facebook and Nextdoor Digest. To ensure that each resident had a personal point of contact, a dedicated Plan email address was publicised.

A household questionnaire was delivered to all homes in the parish accompanied by an explanatory letter from the Parish Council. Analysis of the returned questionnaires informed the development of this revised Farndon Plan. Local businesses were also consulted.

The Parish Council prepared a report on the interpretation of policies in the 2017 Farndon Plan – in as much as they had been tested – to examine if situations had changed externally and/or within Farndon, so as to affect the successful application of those policies.

Every attempt has been made to provide an updated local planning document on which to base a realistic approach to future growth in Farndon, be it for housing, service provision and/or economic development, whilst recognising the limitations imposed by the surrounding agricultural land, the flood plain to the east, the by-pass to the south, the settlement boundary and the constraints of sustainability and climate change.

The Farndon Neighbourhood Development Plan - Five Year Review is an evolution from the original Plan, addresses the lessons learned from the last five years and adopts two additional policies to further protect the village. It is based on legislative requirements and the views of the local community. Comments in the Examiner's Report of 23 October 2017, have afforded an extension to 2035.

## Farndon – History

Farndon lies eight miles south of the city of Chester and is set on a sandstone outcrop above the River Dee which – here - forms a natural border between England and Wales. Dee Cliffs are an important Site of Special Scientific Interest because at this point the river has cut down into the Bunter Pebble Beds and exposed a sequence of river-laid rocks formed within the Triassic period 205 million years ago when England was a low-lying desert region close to the equator. Here the Dee, tidal in those days, becomes shallower and the ford just above Farndon was used from ancient times as an important strategic crossing place between the two countries and was fought over from Roman times until the English Civil War.

Ferentone, as Farndon was originally named, means '*fern-clad hill*' and the results of excavation in the churchyard and the curved nature of the defensive area – now the High Street - suggest that Farndon was originally a Bronze Age settlement. The circular churchyard is indicative of an important early monastic site and an indication that the site has been a place of worship since Anglo-Saxon or even Celtic times. No trace of the monastery has been located.

Roman roads criss-cross Cheshire and Farndon lies near the junction of Watling Street South, the Roman road from Wroxeter to Chester and the ancient Dee crossing between England and Wales. The Roman record in Farndon is scanty although Roman fragments have been found in the churchyard and Roman tiles stamped '*Legio XX*' – logo of the Twentieth Legion (Valeria Victrix) based at Chester – found at Crewe Hill - were probably produced at the Roman tile factory in Holt (Bovium).

Farndon church is dedicated to St Chad who in AD 669 became the first Bishop of the Kingdom of Mercia and was famous for touring his diocese establishing churches wherever he went. St Chad probably visited Farndon and founded the church, along with the five other churches dedicated to him across Cheshire, as well as the St Chad's over the Welsh border in Holt.

Cheshire, especially the area around Farndon, was of military importance because of proximity to Wales and the on-going wars between the two countries. The first Earl of Chester – known locally as Hugh Lupus – made responsible by William the Conqueror for keeping the peace in the area, created a secular sanctuary for outlaws at Kings Marsh to the east of Farndon around 1071. Criminals could stay for a year and a day if they paid a fine, built a shelter overnight and had smoke rising from the chimney by dawn. Not surprisingly many brigands were attracted to the area from all over England and provided local, indentured manpower for the Earl's army in his wars with the Welsh.

In 1086, the Domesday Book recorded a population of 37 in Farndon, land for 16 ploughs, a mill, a fishery and a given value of, in total, 180 shillings. The importance of St Chad's was demonstrated by the presence of a village priest and two other priests, all with land. The church at that time would have been of timber construction but the foundation outline of the present building and the tower, both of which date from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, is of stone.

At the same time as the church tower was built - about 1338 - the monks of St Werburgh's Abbey in Chester built Farndon bridge. The wars with the Welsh had finished and the road through Farndon and over the bridge supported the lucrative trade in salt between Nantwich and Wales. In 1485, a Lancastrian force of 3,000 based at Holt Castle under Sir William Stanley, probably marched across the bridge on the way to the Battle of Bosworth Field. Farndon bridge is now a Grade I listed building and also a Scheduled Monument.

John Speed the Elizabethan historian and map-maker was baptised at Farndon in 1552. It is said that he first began to study 'land *that is afar off*' from the tower of Farndon church. He later moved to London where he became an eminent cartographer and in 1598 presented maps to Queen Elizabeth I. One of the roads in Farndon, Speed's Way, is named after him.

During the Civil War of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the church was a garrison outpost for the Roundheads whereas Holt Castle just across the Dee was held for the Cavaliers. 1643 saw a Civil War skirmish known as the Battle of Farndon Bridge when Farndon was destroyed by fire and St Chad's left derelict. In September 1645, the army of Charles I crossed the Dee at Holt on the way from mid Wales to raise the siege of Chester. They were defeated at the Battle of Rowton Moor and Chester fell to the Parliamentarians. In 1658 due to the damage wreaked by the Civil War the church, excepting the tower, was completely re-built with the addition of the Barnston Chapel and at the same time, the bells were re-cast.

Four years later in 1662 following the Restoration, William Barnston the local landowner and a supporter of Charles I during the Civil War, commissioned the '*Civil War Window*' in the Barnston Chapel to commemorate the Royalist defenders of Chester. It is a fascinating – and possibly unique - illustrative record of the times depicting some of Cheshire's leading Royalists, their clothing and armour and is now a military memorial.

Farndon has its share of war memorials. The Barnston obelisk on Churton Road was erected to the memory of Roger Barnston who died of injuries sustained during the Indian Mutiny at the relief of Lucknow in 1857 – the family having lived in Farndon for 600 years. Many young men from the village served in the Boer War and both World Wars. Those 23 residents who died in the World Wars are commemorated on the War Memorial in the churchyard and the Memorial Hall close to the church was built by public subscription in memory of the fallen.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century Farndon church re-instated the ancient custom of Rushbearing, a tradition which is celebrated each July, installed a new peal of eight bells and made alterations to the church interior to resemble the lay-out seen today. It is now a Grade II\* listed building.

Rock Chapel at the corner of the High Street and Church Street, opened in 1889, burned down in 1957 and was rebuilt and re-dedicated in 1958. It continues to this day serving worshippers of the United Reform Church.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw an annual influx of people who came to pick the famous Farndon strawberries and the first ten years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century brought a telephone service to the Post Office and gas to the village. Electricity came in the late 1920s and piped water by the early 1930s but mains drainage did not arrive until the 1950s. The horse bus to Chester, Malpas and Wrexham survived until the motorbuses of the 1930s.

In 1664 Farndon was a small village with an estimated population of 225. More precise figures can be found in the ten-yearly censuses rising from 357 residents in 1801 to 560 in the late 1930s when council houses at Crewe Lane and private houses on Churton Road were built. Over the next years further housing developments appeared and during the 20 years between 1951 and 1971 the population of the village doubled to 1,162. In 2011 the population was 1,517. In 2021 it was estimated at 2,500.

There have been a surprising number of schools in Farndon since the first one – the Parish School - was built by subscription in 1629. Two private boarding schools, the Academy and Farndon Hall existed by 1850, Farndon House and Farn Hill schools by 1864, Holly Bank catering for eight young ladies by 1870, an Infant school by 1896 and Kings Lee school by 1897. Of these eight schools, Farndon Parish School is the only one that still exists and is now on its third site. There is some interesting 1859 graffiti scratched onto the wooden window shutters of the Lodge, Church Lane, which was once the boarding house for students attending Farndon Hall.

At one time Farndon supported ten public houses catering for day-trippers, strawberry pickers, the Welsh on Sundays when Wales was '*dry*', as well as the local population. Of these, the Hare and the Raven remain to serve the village along with the restaurant and antique shop at Top Farm, a clock

maker, a coffee shop, the butcher's, the paper shop, antiques and collectables, the pharmacy and Post Office, the flower shop, hairdressers and the beauty salon and a number of small commercial businesses. Brewery Motors is no longer the brewery it was during the 19<sup>th</sup> century but is now a motor garage and there is a car hire facility.

Farndon originally grew as a village because it commands an important crossing into Wales and this may be reason that it was overlooked by the merchants of Chester and Nantwich and few large houses are found in the village. Holly Bank is one of them and is Grade II listed as are the Black and White Cottages, The Chimes, Tudor House and others and some cottages in the High Street are listed as Grade II.

The existing housing stock dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century with much of the High Street built during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and Farndon was described as a '*pleasant intermixing of buildings of various styles and periods*'.

Times changed and more modern style housing from the 1960's was built behind the principal roads and large-scale modern housing estates appeared around the village between 2015 and 2019.

Farndon Parish Council dates from 4 December 1894 and Farndon itself has been under the jurisdiction of Cheshire West and Chester Council since it was established on 1 April 2009.

On 1 April 2015, Farndon Parish boundaries were extended to include the settlement of Kings Marsh and the entire hamlet of Crewe-by-Farndon. *See Map 1 page 7.*

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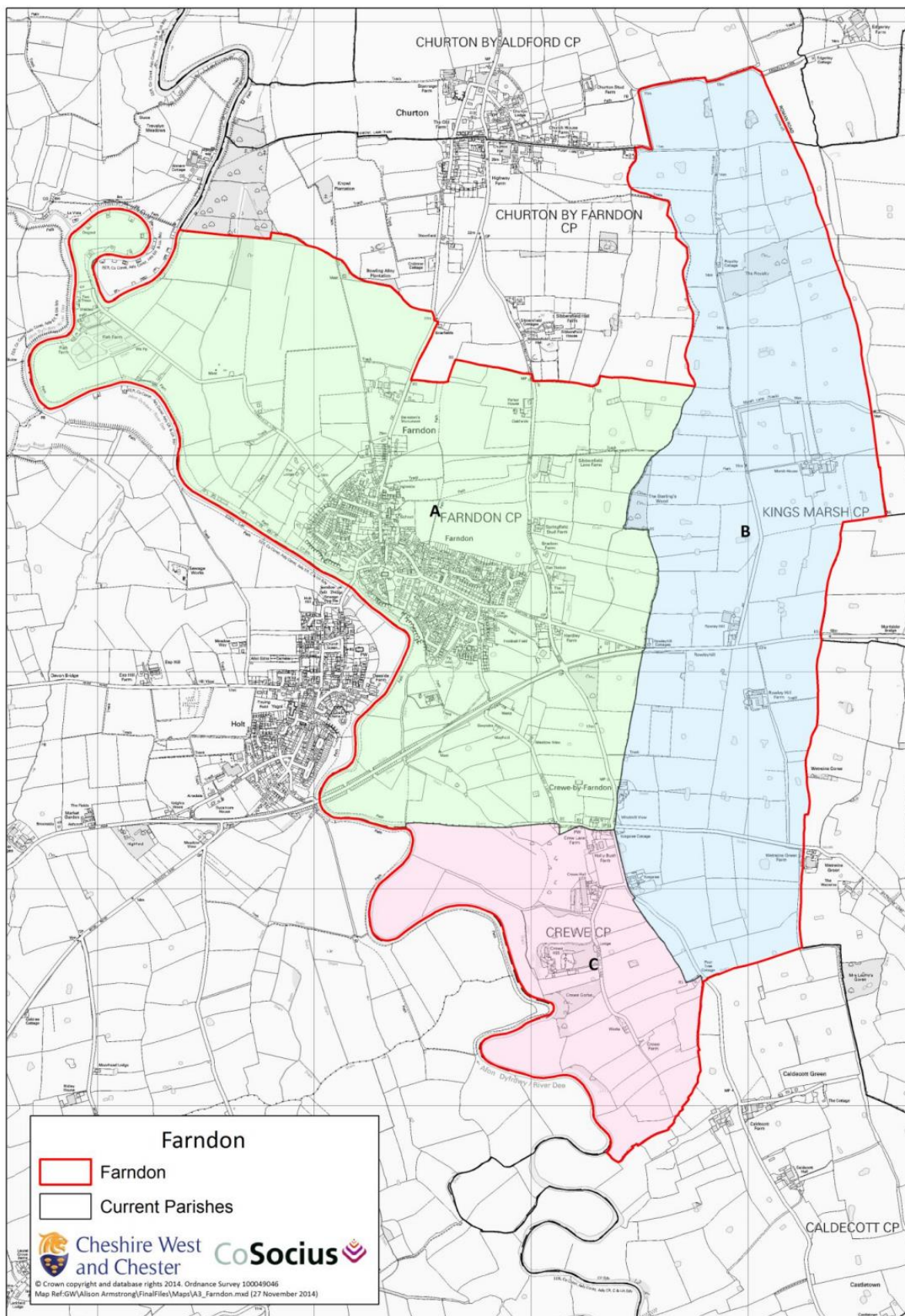
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# Section 2

## Plan Development



## **2. Plan Development, Vision and Objectives**

Residents of Farndon – of all ages – residents and businesses were closely involved in the Five Year Review of the Farndon Neighbourhood Plan 2010 to 2030.

The original plan included six policies - the local economy; homes to meet the needs of the village; protecting the built environment; facilities for local people; transport and communication; and landscape and environment.

A household questionnaire and covering letter from the Parish Council were distributed to all properties in Farndon at the beginning of the six-week consultation period explaining why the five year review was being conducted – it was to: -

- Help revise and keep the Farndon Plan up to date.
- Invite and involve all residents to have their input.
- Check that the Plan remained relevant to the community.
- Confirm to the extent possible, how the policies were working in reality.
- Ensure that the Plan reflected new and developing conditions.

Questions included information about households (anonymous), re-affirmation of current policies and views on new additional considerations.

As a consequence of the Covid 19 restrictions, the Parish Council was not able to arrange face to face discussions or meetings with residents and so a poster and leaflet and on-line publicity plan was launched, the comments section of the household questionnaire was highlighted and a dedicated email made available.

Community feedback was dramatic. The response rate to the household questionnaire was over 34% compared with 16% for the original Plan and more than 50% of respondents made additional helpful, thoughtful and constructive comments. Huge support was expressed for protecting the village, with a clear preference for no further development.

This response was not unexpected given that during the previous few years many residents had expressed an on-going and deep concern about the large and rapid increase in the size of the village – a 41% population rise in four years – high stress levels on public services, loss of agricultural land, heavy increase in traffic and the absence of any opportunity to grow the village according to any identified need - incrementally and sustainably.

Most residents expressed continuing support for the existing Plan and feedback strongly suggested that the five year review should result in a substantially strengthened Plan and should include two new policies. Building standards must meet the strengthening government legislation, local regulations and the Farndon Design Code. A binding requirement that any new, extended or adapted development must mitigate the effects of climate change.

Simultaneously, the Parish Council undertook a systematic review of each of the six existing policies – in as much as they have been tested – to check whether they were being interpreted as anticipated and whether external situations had affected the application of policies.

When taken together with the background information on Farndon, the national legislative basis of neighbourhood planning and the comments and recommendations of the Independent Examiner dated 23 October 2017- specifically paragraph 4.9 on housing supply, and paragraph 4.11 on restrictions on future development, the Parish Council developed a vision, achievable objectives and sustainable policies up to 2035.

## **Vision**

*“In twenty years time Farndon will still be a rural village with a strong community ethos. It will value its heritage, river and surroundings while providing people with a safe and sustainable environment. Farndon will be a welcoming place providing local employment and encouraging visitors.”*

## **Objectives**

- Protect and maintain the rural character of the landscape and the natural environment.
- Protect the built environment, heritage assets and the Conservation Area.
- Strengthen existing economic activities and support new opportunities for local employment.
- Ensure that housing growth is in line with policy – Examiner’s Report 4.9.
- Consider future development on ‘*previously developed land*’ and ‘*undeveloped land*’ in sustainable locations within or near the settlement boundary – Examiner’s Report 4.11.
- Respect the distinctive local character (of historic buildings) for all new development including extensions, in relation to building materials, building lines, density, height, massing and design – Farndon Design Code.
- Increase environmental protection.
- Impose sustainability mitigations.
- Adhere to zero emission targets for all developments and renovations.

## **Existing Policies**

- The local economy
- Homes to meet the needs of the village
- Protecting the built environment
- Facilities for local people
- Transport and communication
- Landscape and environment

## **New Policies**

- Sustainable development
- Farndon Design Code

## **Documentary Evidence**

The vision, objectives and policies are based on: -

- Questionnaires – one household and one business questionnaire with records of responses, narrative and graphic analysis.
- Information leaflets and posters.
- National legislation plus local plans and reports prepared by Cheshire West and Chester Council and predecessors, Natural England and other environmental organisations.

- Evidence from “*Farndon Ward Snapshot*” – May 2015 CWaC.
- Evidence from the Local Plan including the Landscape Strategy and Conservation Area appraisal – CWaC.
- The Independent Examiners Report – 23 October 2017.
- Parish Council Report – Farndon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017 – Review.
- Census - showed the population of Farndon to be stable at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2001 the population was 1,517 and in 2011 was 1,653. The 2021 census was not available at the date of writing but the addition of two small hamlets and approximately 250 houses in the parish since 2011 is likely to have increased the population to about 2,500.

## **Process**

Neighbourhood planning regulations require a six-week consultation period at the beginning of the process. It ran from 29 April 2021 to 14 June 2021. A further six-week pre-submission consultation is required before formal submission of the revised Plan to the local authority.

The development of the Farndon Plan has reached this stage.

# Section 3

## **Policy Development**

## Policy Development

### 3.1 Overview

Neighbourhood Plans are subject to government policy on land-use, development and environmental protection and it was in this context that the six policies included in the original Farndon Plan were developed.

The five year review was undertaken in response to recent government housing and environmental policies, the rapid expansion of Farndon, the Examiners Report 2017, the Parish Council report on the existing Plan, analysis of the household questionnaire 2021 and discussions with local businesses.

Policy development was ultimately directed by the interpretation of the results of the analysis which the Parish Council considered carefully. Main conclusions were: -

*Residents really quite like Farndon as it is – a small rural village*

*Traffic and parking in the village are problems*

*There is no desire or defined need for further development*

*The current village boundaries are to be safeguarded*

*Environmental concerns are very high amongst residents*

*Nobody wants a sea of housing filling the gaps between Churton, Farndon or Crewe-by-Farndon*

As a result, two new policies have been included in the revised Plan to further protect Farndon from inappropriate development – style and location – and comply with government policies to mitigate the effects of a changing climate.

Each policy is described separately and each is considered in the context of the parish, its location, history, residents and their views, relevant national legislation, local planning policies and advice from bodies such as Natural England. For ease of reference, the appropriate legislation is listed at the end of each policy descriptive along with a note of linked annexes.

Residents believe that when taken together, the facts and the policies support development that is appropriate, located within the areas identified in the Plan and confirmed by the Examiner, complies with government legislation – sustainability and environmental - concerned with climate change and the Farndon Design Code.

Planning proposals for Farndon must conform with all the policies and to that end, the Parish Council will work with Cheshire West and Chester Council to ensure that Farndon does not morph into a dormitory village housing a largely peripatetic population but remains a rural village with a growing economy and a vibrant sense of self and belonging.

As with the original Farndon Plan, the review identified a number of issues which are somewhat indirectly linked to land use – they are aspirations - and are included for the sake of completeness as 'Actions for the Parish Council', who will pursue the subjects separately on behalf of the village.

## Policy Development

### 3.2 Responses to Household Questionnaires Summary – Analysis

#### Introduction

Commencing April 2021, a questionnaire was distributed to all known addresses in Farndon Parish. In total 1,062 households received an invitation to complete a six-page A4 document and return it via an attached envelope to one of three well known village outlets, the Post Office, the local newsagent's and Lewis's High Street Coffee Shop. This analysis has been prepared on the results of the survey and is intended to assist the Parish Council on ways in which the 2017 Neighbourhood Plan should be revised.

All the questionnaires were anonymous but to ensure we had a representative response throughout the village a simple indexing of the return envelopes was used to identify the demographic region that the questionnaire had been issued to.

#### Methodology

The questions in the survey were divided into three, differently coloured parts:

Part 1 (blue) - was about the respondent and their simple demographics, their type of tenure, household occupancy, age, working or educational activity, how long they intend to stay in Farndon, and whether they had additional or alternative accommodation needs.

Part 2 (pink) - referenced the current Farndon Neighbourhood Plan and invited responses on each of the policies within the plan. Each policy area was summarised and three options were given to confirm or reject the base statement. (Agree still relevant/More needs to be done/Less relevant today). Opinions were sought on the six core policies of the current Farndon Neighbourhood Plan.

Part 3 (green) - gave a short introduction to "*green*" technology considerations, energy management, motorised transport pollution and carbon footprint. Responses were sought to help understand the emphasis that these issues should carry in future planning applications. Finally, we asked if the village should consider more development and if so, on what scale.

The questionnaire then asked if any other matters should be considered by planning authorities and free text area was offered for written comments.

When collating the results no weighting was put on responses, so positives do not cancel negatives, they are both counted i.e., if one respondent marked "*we should do more*" was not weighted against another who responded "*we should do less*". They were counted as number "*for*" 1, number "*against*" 1.

No attempt was made at point of entry to rationalise or "*correct*" entries, they were entered purely as they were presented, so missing fields were not corrected, or contradictions (retired but working 10 miles away) were entered exactly as given.

The database is a true and honest representation of the data as it was supplied.

All responses have been numbered and kept to ensure integrity and an audit trail established.



## **Analysis Part 1**

The locational analysis shows that we have had a very broad response from all areas of the village.

The average total response stands at 34% (360 from 1,062) with highlights from Chester Road, where over 50% of the houses responded. Others with exceptional responses were Crewe-by-Farndon and Maddock's Close. Some of the most established houses in the village and some of the newest.

All areas had a very creditable response rate and no area was un-represented. An overwhelming response.

The type of tenure was 85% owner occupied on the returns received.

The occupation rates were mostly couples and families, no real surprise for a rural village.

The age demographics show a tendency for retired people, but Farndon is by no means a rest home, there are many young people and young families in Farndon.

It is obvious that few people rely on the bus service and most use their own car for their daily commute.

There is little or no further housing need for village residents. Some 26, want smaller homes and they are nearly balanced by the 17 seeking larger ones, leaving 9 available for new residents.

In all only 6 (1.6%) responders would like alternative/shared ownership or low-cost housing and would like it to be newly developed. Many of the 291 residents who envisaged moving within the community wanted to do so within the existing housing stock. Very few identified a need for further development to be balanced against the 314 (87%) who do not want further development.

## **Analysis Part 2**

There is overwhelming support for the current Farndon Neighbourhood Plan policies, which considering that the village has grown by nearly 50% since the original Farndon Neighbourhood Plan was conceived is remarkable. It would appear that new villagers care as deeply and about the same issues as the more established.

Care for the environment (Policy 6) was very strongly supported, whereas the developing tourism and retaining retail or employment opportunities were less strongly supported.

However, generally the existing Farndon Plan has very little dissent and there is ringing endorsement of the current Plan.

## **Analysis Part 3**

It is stunning how environmental concerns seem to have been universally adopted.

Any new development will only be accepted if these issues are addressed. In the free text additional comments area, traffic pollution and traffic generally, seems to have become a serious issue. Any further development can only make this worse.

Further development was universally rejected, even the majority who were seeking alternate or new property in Farndon were against further development.

## Conclusions

This survey clearly shows Farndon residents, both established residents and more recent ones, care deeply about their village. The returns would not be so overwhelming if this were not the case. No area was poorly represented.

There was little evidence of reluctance to take part and we received only one “*Spoilt*” paper. Some (less than 2%) entries had contradictions in their response’s where people may have mis-read or mis-interpreted the questions e.g. retired people travelling to work by car. However overwhelmingly it was clearly well understood and it was obvious that people had taken great care and some considerable thought to their returns.

There were very few where the tick-boxes were missed or ignored.

Over half of responder’s had added comments and sometimes had used the back of the questionnaire to make extensive remarks.

The re-occurring theme in the comments was that traffic, infrastructure, school, doctors, parking are high on the interest points for residents across the board. Clearly any development outside the current settlement boundaries would add to the traffic and parking difficulties, and would be very unpopular. Development outside the defined ‘*settlement boundary*’ would be firmly resisted as it would be in open countryside.

An exceedingly large proportion made it clear that they thought Farndon was full, and some thought it had already been over developed. This was not “*pulling up the drawbridge*” but genuine fears that the character of the village was in jeopardy.

In all only six people wanted an additional home to accommodate family members. Twenty-six wanted smaller homes (downsizing), seventeen wanted larger homes. However, with over two hundred retired people and nearly one hundred single person households it is clear that houses will be coming onto the market at a rate that satisfies demand.

The complete analysis can be found as an Annex.

*Analysis 5<sup>TH</sup> July 2021 following 360 returns*

## Policy Development

### 3.3 Summary of policies

| <i>Topic</i>              | <i>Policy</i>  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 Economy                 | 1.1 Protect existing employment premises and premises<br>1.2 Promote employment opportunities<br>1.3 Encourage a range of goods and services within the village<br>1.4 Protect common and other land along the riverbank |
| 2 Housing                 | 2.1 Sites for housing development<br>2.2 Scale and style of housing  |
| 3 Built environment       | 3.1 New development to be low key and preserve views and vistas<br>3.2 Design and layout to new developments will be required to<br>3.3 Conservation Area, listed buildings and their settings                           |
| 4 Facilities              | 4.1 Provision of facilities and services<br>4.2 Change of use or redevelopment   |
| 5 Communication           | 5.1 Road safety and congestion<br>5.2 Pedestrians and cyclists   |
| 6 Environment             | 6.1 Conserve the landscape<br>6.2 Protect and conserve natural assets – including wildlife, trees and hedges<br>6.3 Protect local green spaces   |
| 7 Sustainable development | 7.1 Sustainable development for a sustainable future<br>7.2 Sustainable development for a sustainable parish   |
| 8 Design Code             | Farndon Design Code  |

# Topic 1

**The Local Economy**

## The Local Economy – leading to Policy 1

### Background

Historically, agriculture – and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, education – was the most prominent business sector and employer in the area. The national decline in the size of the agricultural workforce has affected Farndon and although there are still a significant number of local people working in agriculture, there are many fewer employees.

Until the 1960's, there were three working farms within the village itself. Bottom Farm and Church Farm have been converted into housing whereas Top Farm farmhouse has been repurposed and includes a restaurant and antique shop, a hairdresser, a physiotherapist and photographer. The outbuilding are now small workshops and retail space.

During recent years, two grocery shops have closed, one has been converted into two houses and the other into an antiques and collectables shop. One of the three public houses, The Nag's Head has been replaced by a coffee house, three retail units and eight dwellings. The riverside café has been replaced by a domestic dwelling. Monument Place, the small industrial estate on the northern approach to the village is a thriving little business park and is close to the Dandelions Nursery for pre-school children.

The local economy comprises a small range of shops including a newsagent, dry cleaning and shoe repair service; a butchers and general store; two public houses; a restaurant combining an antique shop; a coffee shop with gifts; a florist; an antique and collectables shop; holiday homes and bed-and-breakfasts plus the surgery, Post Office, pharmacy and primary school along with personal services including the beauty salon, hairdressers and a physiotherapist. Professional services include an architect; a photographer; a clock repairer and serviced office rentals. Home services available include window shutters and blinds, building; heating and plumbing; car repair and hire; and leisure vehicle storage. And for our dogs, a grooming salon. The Country Market is held on Wednesday mornings at Rock Chapel and a new green burial ground, Monument Meadow, has recently opened adjacent to the Barnston Memorial on Churton Road.

Suitable sites of renewable energy have not been identified in the area covered by the Farndon Plan. Exploratory drilling for coal bed methane gas at a site at King's Marsh in 2014 and a planning application for a solar farm near Shocklach in 2017 did not progress.

The Neighbourhood Plan recognises that while the majority of residents work outside the village, the local economy should be supported by encouraging the re-use, and thereby sustainable use, of any vacant industrial spaces ranging as they do from small offices to workshops, rather than allowing new-build commercial premises or conversion to housing.

### Community Consultation

The 2017 Farndon Plan described Farndon as 'a *gentle place to live*' – a country village that should be maintained and nurtured.

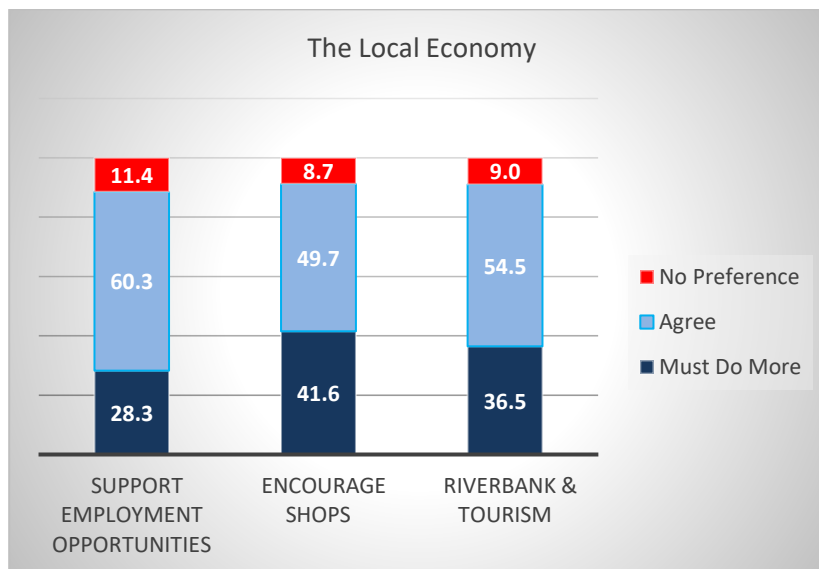
Responses to the 2021 household questionnaires show very clearly that residents no longer believe this to be the case. Major concerns are voiced in the comments on 50% of the returned questionnaires

and in discussion with residents which range from the perceived ruination of Farndon by the imposition – in a very short space of time – of hundreds of houses on a small village without the infrastructure necessary to support many additional residents, to the impact of an estimated additional 400 cars decanting daily onto the two narrow roads running through the village, the regular flouting of speed limits, the general impossibility of parking in the village and the dangerous nature of feeder roads, all of which lead to the dissatisfaction expressed. This cannot be described as the sustainable development required by legislation.

As one resident wrote '*Enough is Enough*'.

There is no longer a belief – as was expressed in the 2017 Plan – that the Parish Council should in any way promote Farndon as a tourist destination. Quite the opposite – the evidence is that residents would prefer that the riverbank was protected – the 84% in 2017 became 91% in 2021 – an increase of 108%. The message is - protect – not develop.

There is on-going support for the protection of existing employment and premises – the 84% in 2017 became 89% in 2021 and a hope for more shops increased from 80% in 2017 to 91% in 2021 and for more local jobs – increased from 72% in 2017 to 82% in 2021.



The reality is that in common with many villages, Farndon may be losing some retail employment opportunities to the white vans of delivery companies. Fortunately, most commercial premises in the village are almost fully utilised.

Consultation with the Farndon business community and mentioned in comments on the household questionnaires identified on-going concerns about the inadequacy of high-speed broadband which remains well below acceptable speeds while mobile phone coverage is very patchy and, in many localities, inadequate.

### **Details of Policy 1 – Local Economy**

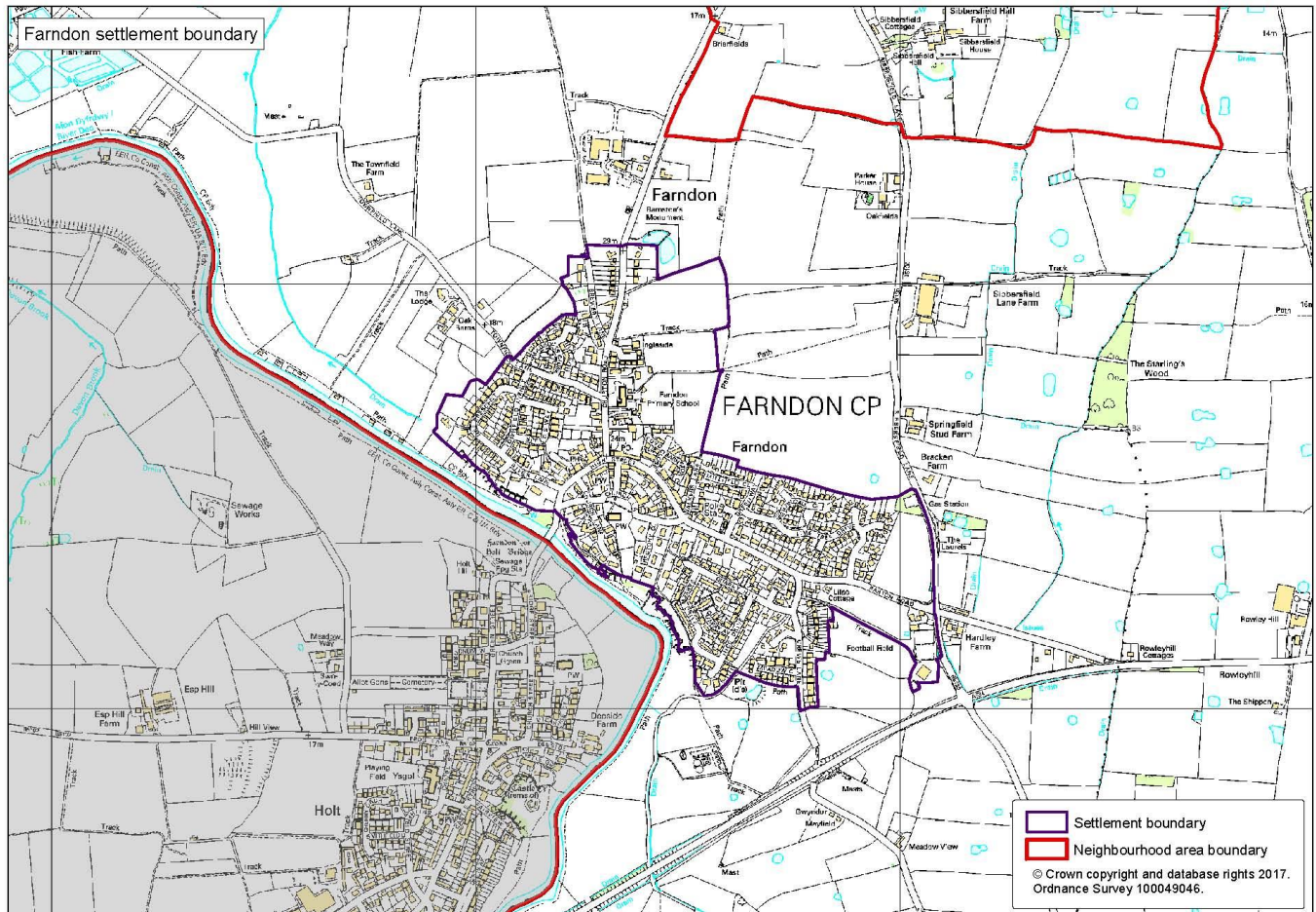
The Parish Council is aware that the Covid 19 epidemic has – in many instances – had a detrimental effect on local businesses and the local economy. Policies linked to the economy here-in-after



described, should be interpreted understanding the financial and other pressures which have affected individual businesses during this time.

The Farndon Plan offers the opportunity for employment provision and job opportunities only on '*previously developed land*' within and without the established '*settlement boundary*'. However, there is little undeveloped land within the '*settlement boundary*' suitable for development of any type.

All other land outside the '*settlement boundary*' is designated grade 1 or grade 2 agricultural land.



**Farndon Settlement Boundary Map**

### Policy 1.1 Protect existing employment land and premises

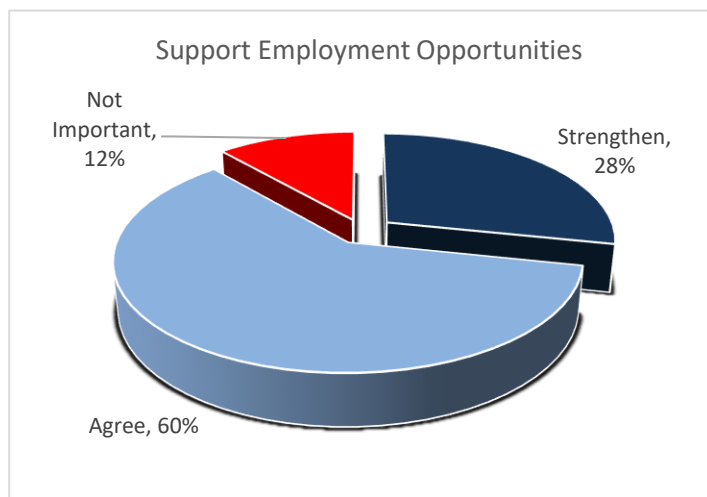
Proposals resulting in loss of employment provision will be required to demonstrate that: -

- the premises have been empty and actively marketed for at least six months at a realistic rate; and
- attempts have been made to preserve employment opportunities by re-locating the business within the parish; and
- the premises are no longer viable for employment – commercial or industrial.

The loss of retail and other employment premises within Farndon itself to wholly residential use will be resisted subject to the right of development which would be permitted under the General Permitted Development Order.

Re-use of existing rural buildings outside the '*settlement boundary*' – Map 2 - for economic purposes will be supported.

Development on agricultural land will not be supported.



The employment base in Farndon itself is varied, eclectic and small scale. It includes the professions, personal and public services, commercial and industrial activities, and retail.

Responses to the questionnaires and consultations show that residents continue to welcome small scale commercial and retail activities within the village to enhance the viability of existing shops and services.

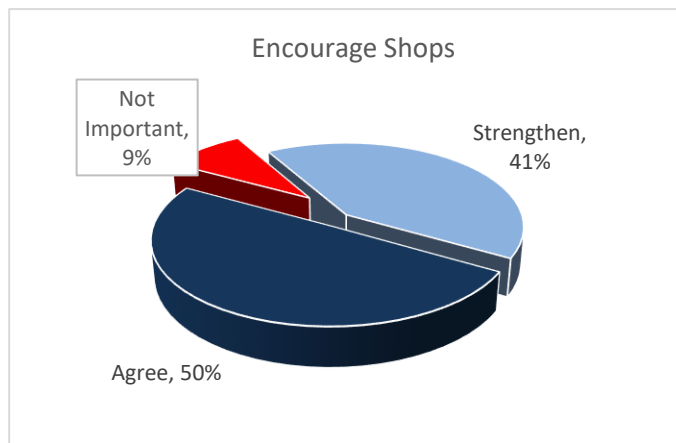
### Policy 1.2 Promote employment opportunities

Proposals for the development of new businesses or expansion or extension of existing businesses will be supported where the re-development: -

- is located within the employment site at Monument Place as identified in the Local Plan (Part Two); or
- involves the redevelopment of '*previously developed land*' within the '*settlement boundary*' subject to the Local Plan Policy SOC 5; or
- is a sympathetic conversion of existing rural buildings for employment purposes.

Proposals for new or expanded businesses should respect the local character of Farndon itself, the Farndon Design Code and the Conservation Area.

Residents would also welcome additional small scale retail facilities.



### Policy 1.3 Encourage a range of goods and services within the village

Proposals for new retail and leisure facilities will be supported which: -

- lie within the '*settlement boundary*'; and
- enhance the viability of the High Street area; and
- respect the Conservation Area; and
- do not detract from the local character of Farndon High Street; and
- are proportionate to the location in scale and style; and
- are small scale as appropriate to a small Cheshire village.

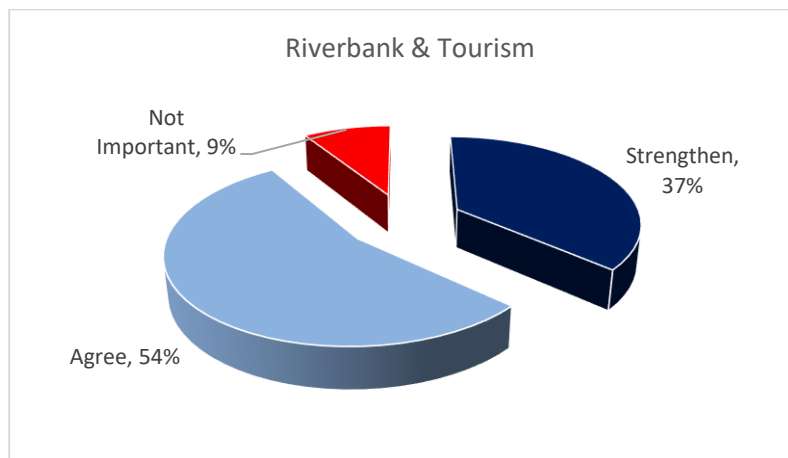
The Dee itself and the nearby cliffs are important natural and geographical Sites of Special Scientific Interest which extend all along the Triassic sandstone cliffs south of Farndon bridge which is itself a Grade 1 listed building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

A major consideration in framing this policy is that village support for any commercial activity along the riverbank is nil – the consistent theme apparent during the consultation is that the riverbank should be protected.

Many local people and visitors enjoy the riverbank, and amenities south of the bridge include a number of fishing pegs available for licenced use, a river boardwalk and the public toilets. maintained by Cheshire West and Chester Council. The picnic area has been cleared for ease of access and the derelict plots along the base of the cliffs have been replaced with a domestic property.

#### **Policy 1.4 Protect common and other land along the riverbank**

Low-key recreational use of the riverbank will be supported but further recreational development on the riverbank will not be approved.



#### **Actions for the Parish Council**

Most commercial units and shops in and around the village are fully utilised although they change hands from time to time.

The Parish Council will encourage new employment opportunities in vacated units and shops and thus reduce the possibility of the conversion of empty units into housing.

## **Supporting Legislation and Advice**

- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained – EC6, EC11, EC12
  - CWaC Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan 2011
  - Cheshire Community Action – Rural Community Profile for Farndon (Parish) January 2012
  - National Planning Policy Framework 2012: Achieving Sustainable Development – paragraph 6 to 10
  - Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 number 10
  - Local Government Information Unit '*Administration of Business Rates in England. Discussion Paper*' - 22 May 2014
  - CWaC Local Plan Part One 2015 – Strategic Objectives SO3 and Economy ECON 1
  - Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.
- 
- **Annexes**
  - Household Questionnaire - May 2021
  - Farndon Neighbourhood Planning - questionnaire results – 5 July 2021
  - Household questionnaires – responses by percentage
  - Household questionnaires – written comments
  - National Census 2011 – summary for Farndon.



# Topic 2

**Homes to Meet the Needs of the Village**

## Homes to Meet the Needs of the Village – Leading to Policy 2

### Background

Farndon Parish covers the village itself, the settlement of Kings Marsh to the east and the hamlet of Crewe-by-Farndon to the south. The 2011 census recorded a total of 740 houses in the parish the majority of which were in the village centre, then spread east along the High street to Barton Road and to the north on Churton Road.

In 2010, Cheshire West and Chester Council published Preferred Policy Options – PD04 Rural Area, in which Farndon was identified as a ‘*Key Service Centre*’ with a proposed level of new housing provision 2010 - 2030 (annualised) as 200 (ten dwellings per annum), confirmed by the adopted Local Plan (Part One) 2015 – with the justification: -

- *Considered a reasonable level of growth due to size and function of settlement and flood risk constraints and*
- *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2010 identifies sufficient sites to meet this requirement’.*

Villages are fragile environments and development should be carefully considered for setting and style and volume. It is most important that growth is incremental, in response to identified need, harmonising with the existing character and scale of the area.

These are the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) policy STRAT 6, and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 – and reflect the principals of sustainable development combined with respect for the natural and historic environment of the locality.

Sustainable communities rely on a variety of local services to accommodate the needs of the existing residents and able to absorb or expand to meet stresses from an increased population. Incremental housing growth allows services the time to respond.

Census 2001 population of Farndon was 1,517 and in 2011 it was 1,653. The increase over ten years was 136 residents. The population was stable. There was not deemed to be a housing shortage.

It was thought that growth over the 20-year period of the Plan at the rate of build advised by Cheshire West and Chester Council – ten houses per annum - would allow for a ‘*village mix*’ of housing on ‘*brownfield land*’, SHLAA sites and ‘*in-fill*’, including cottage - style and family homes and ‘*affordable*’ units. Sustainable and incremental.

The facts tell a vastly different story. Although the details of the 2021 census were not available at the time of writing, what is known is that during the ten years since the 2011 census two small hamlets were added to the parish and 240 additional estate-style, often four and five bedroomed, houses were built around the village. 222 of these houses were built on productive agricultural land, some of which was ‘*best and most versatile*’, and the developments resulted in the destruction of green fields, ancient hedgerows and small animal habitat. Each of the four large developments was rejected by the Parish Council, but all were, eventually, awarded planning permission.

The population of Farndon is now an estimated 2,500 with 1,766 registered on the Electoral Roll. An increase of 41% in the four years following 2015 and an overall increase of 66% during the ten years since 2011.

This is far in excess of the ten dwellings per annum envisioned in the Preferred Policy Options – PD04 Rural Area.

The Examiner's Report on Farndon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2010-2030 recognised the disparity stating: -

*'Therefore, there is an excess of 52 dwellings above the minimum requirement of 200. Accordingly, there has been no need to allocate additional land for residential development at Farndon in the CWaCLP (Part Two) or in the NDP.'*

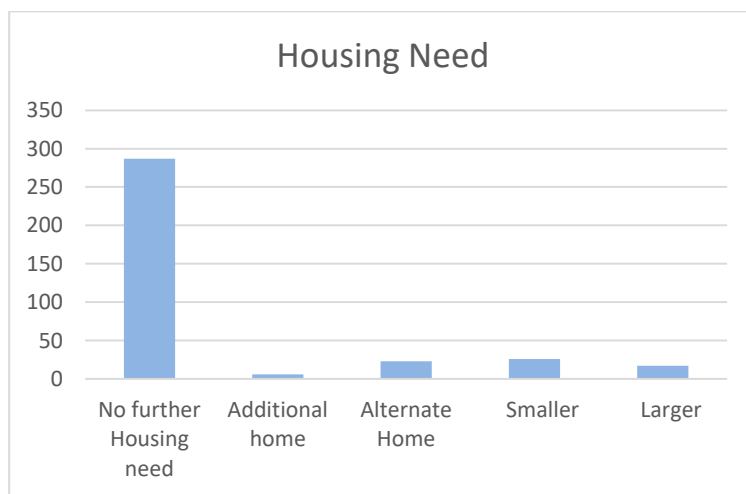
This confirms that the target set by Cheshire West and Chester Council has already been met and extends the period of the Plan until 2035.

### Community Consultation

The initial consultation for the 2017 Farndon Plan was undertaken before the four large developments were built and showed a clear preference for a better mix of housing including properties for down-sizers and first-time buyers favouring small-scale and in-fill, phased in over a number of years.

Subsequent consultations recorded the mounting concern and fury of residents as the village was suddenly surrounded by developments, as far removed in size and design from the preferred options of residents as it seemed possible to imagine. Every road into Farndon, except from Wales, is lined with modern estate-style anodyne housing.

An analysis of the 360 responses to the 2021 household questionnaire concerning future development confirms that residents see no need for, and are opposed to, any further development in or around Farndon.



The analysis further demonstrates that there is little or no further housing need for village residents. Some 26 want smaller homes and they are nearly balanced by the 17 seeking larger homes. On these figures, nine houses are available for new residents.

Very few identified a need for further development of any kind (0.6%). This number should be balanced by the 314 (87%) who do not want further development.

- No need for further housing –  $314/360 = 87\%$
- Need for smaller home –  $26/360 = 7.2\%$
- Need for larger home –  $17/360 = 4.7\%$ .

The household questionnaire asked residents specifically about shared ownership, more commonly referred to as '*affordable*' homes. The definition of '*affordable*' housing was included on page 2 of the questionnaire to ensure that residents were clear about the criteria for tenure and need. Only six responders of 360 (1.6%), would like shared ownership or low-cost housing and would like it to be newly developed and kept in perpetuity.

Many of those who envisage moving within the community wish to do so within the existing housing stock, 291 responses = 80%.

When it comes to location of future developments the responses are: -

- Development on '*brownfield land*' only – 96% approve
- Development within the '*settlement boundary*' only – 97%
- Development outside the '*settlement boundary*' to be on '*brownfield*' sites only – 96%
- Development to be fewer than ten houses – 97%
- Affordable housing to be kept affordable in perpetuity – 94%.

This survey, and especially this section of the survey, clearly shows that Farndon residents, both established residents and more recent ones, care deeply about their village. The returns would not be so overwhelming if this were not the case. No area of the village was poorly represented in the responses.

A summary is at Section 3.2 of this review and in full in the Annex.

The recurring theme of the comments concerns the over-development of the village and the stress it has laid on residents, services and village life. Any development outside the current settlement boundary would add to the problems within the village and would be deeply unpopular and would be firmly resisted as it would inevitably be in open countryside and in contravention of the conclusions of the Examiner's Report.

An exceedingly large proportion of residents have made it clear that they thought Farndon was full and some thought that it had already been overdeveloped. This was not '*pulling up the drawbridge*' but genuine fears that the character of the village is in jeopardy.

## Details of Policy 2 – Housing

This revision of the Farndon Plan takes the views of Farndon residents, expressed in the questionnaires, as instructions to the Parish Council.

Residents have made their opinions clear. They are concerned about location, scale and style – and identified need - of all development in Farndon.

There is very little '*brownfield*' or '*undeveloped land*' within the '*settlement boundary*' or within the wider parish which restricts any opportunities for development. Map 2.

Applications for change of use between commercial and residential and vice versa will be carefully investigated, as will be the proposed demolition of existing housing or commercial or agricultural stock for the purpose of developing multiple housing.

It is important that the limitations for approval of any additional housing in Farndon is understood and clearly set out in this revised Plan.

### Policy 2.1 Sites for housing development

- within the '*settlement boundary*' on '*previously developed*' land.
- subsequently within the '*settlement boundary*' small scale development on undeveloped land – consistent with the Examiner's Report dated 10 October 2017
- outside the '*settlement boundary*' small-scale development on '*previously developed*' land – consistent with policy DM1 of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two).

Proposals which meet the above criteria must also meet the requirements of Policies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 of the Plan, Policy SOC 5 of the Local Plan and the Examiner's Report paragraphs 4.11 and 4.16.

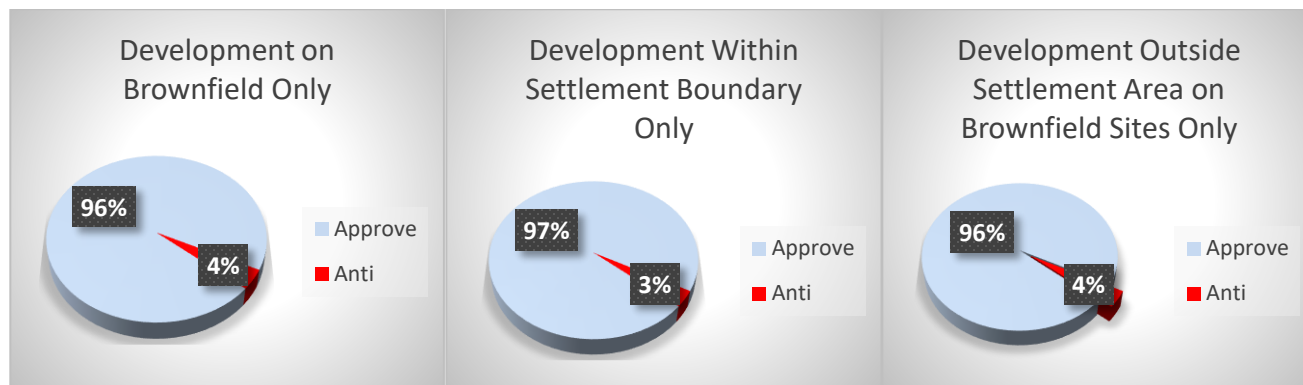
Proposals for new residential development which rely on the demolition of existing buildings – residential or commercial or agricultural – to be replaced with multiple and/or unsympathetic properties - will be resisted.

Proposals for development on '*best and most versatile agricultural land*' will not be approved – CWaC policy EC20.

Proposals for new residential development in open countryside or on agricultural land will not be approved – Housing and Planning Act 2016 and Local Plan (Part One).

A Local Housing Need has not been demonstrated in either the household questionnaires or the consultations and consequently the criteria for identifying rural exception sites have not been met and will not be approved – Examiner's Report 4.16.

Any planning application for housing development within bullet points 2 and 3 at 2.1 above, would be required to demonstrate that there are no appropriate sites within bullet point 1 and – additionally - that there is a clearly identified need.



Consultation with residents is clear. Farndon has been over-developed. It should remain – it should have remained – a village in the vernacular style of Cheshire villages complying with Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012.

For this reason, the Parish Council has included a Design Code for Farndon as Policy 8 of this revised Plan.

### **Policy 2.2 Scale and style of housing**

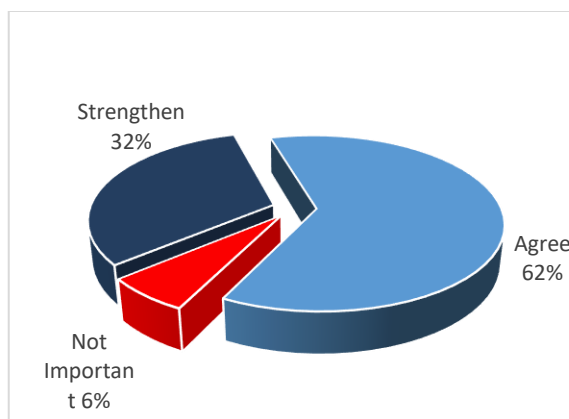
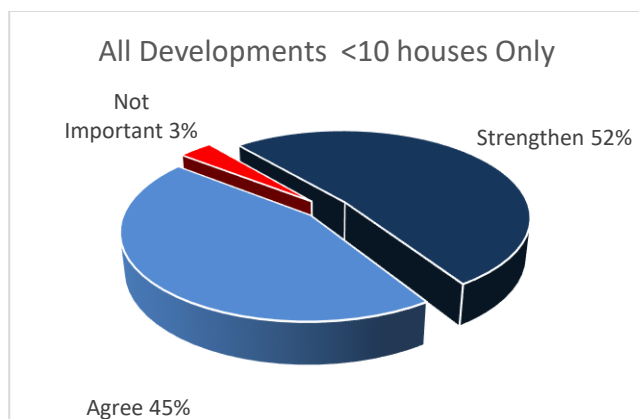
New housing should be in response to a demonstrated need and: -

- reflect the criteria set out in Building for Life 12; and
- small scale – fewer than ten houses - respecting the Cheshire character of the village regarding brick, roofing, hedging; and
- smaller two and three bedroomed homes - for outright purchase; and
- sheltered housing – for people with a local connection.

Applications which seek to rely on the fewer than ten houses limitation as a route to 'incremental' per annum growth will be rejected.

Applications for extensions and modifications to existing buildings will be required to conform to the Farndon Design Code especially with respect to floor space, volume and scale.





The original Farndon Neighbourhood Plan housing policy was designed to ensure that Farndon remained a rural village with any development to be small in scale and to suit the local population and to ensure that Farndon did not become a dormitory village with the consequent high daily use of cars, increased pollution, overcrowding of roads and over stretching of facilities.

In this the Plan failed.

Given the opportunity to review the Plan in 2021, residents have responded in large numbers and constructively and have made clear that there is little or no further need for any additional housing, including social housing, in Farndon.

There is also a concern that some proposed extensions and modifications to properties may be out of scale with the property itself and overwhelming to the locality. These issues must be addressed during the planning process.

### Action for the Parish Council

The Parish Council will work with Cheshire West and Chester Council to ensure that planning proposals for developments within the parish are carefully considered and: -

1. respect the directions of the Farndon residents expressed in this five year review; and
2. ensure that the Examiner's Report is awarded full weight in decision making; and
3. insist on the application of the Farndon Design Code for new build, extensions and modifications; and
4. resist '*in-fill*' and '*replacement*' building – within or without the '*settlement boundary*' which results in multiple properties; and
5. reject any development on open countryside or agricultural land; and
6. carefully consider any proposed change of use.

The Parish Council will conduct a five yearly review of housing need within the parish.

### Supporting Legislation and Advice

- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) notified (Under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act) 1981
- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained – EC6, EC11, EC12

- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA 2010)
- Localism Act 2011
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012: Achieving sustainable development – paragraphs 6 to 10
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 – all
- Cheshire West Strategic Housing Assessment 2013
- CWaC Local Plan (Part One) 2015
  - Preferred Policy Option Rural area (Key Service Centre) PD04
  - Strategic Objectives SO3
  - Economy ECON 1
  - Previously Developed Land – STRAT 1
  - Development in Farndon itself – STRAT 8
  - Development in the countryside – STRAT 9
  - Affordable housing – SOC 1
  - Flood risk – ENV 1
  - Best and most versatile land – loss to development will not be allowed – EC20
- Housing Bill 2015 – prior use of '*brownfield land*' by 2020
- Housing and Planning Act 2016 and Local Plan (Part One) – re-use of previously developed land in preference to greenfield land.
- Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017
- Examiner's Report on Farndon Neighbourhood Plan 2010-2030 – of 10 October 2017
- Recycling our Land – The state of brownfield report – CPRE 2021.

## Annexes

- Household questionnaire – May 2021 – Part's I, 2 and 3.
- Farndon Neighbourhood Planning - questionnaire results – 5 July 2021
- Household questionnaire – responses by percentage
- Housing questionnaire – written comments
- National census – summary for Farndon
- Farndon Design Code – Policy 8.

# Topic 3

**Protecting the Built Environment**

## Protecting the Built Environment—Leading to Policy 3

### Background

Farndon is an ancient village dating back to pre-Saxon times with Roman undertones and consequently has a long history and a rich built heritage dating mainly from the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Roman roads run close to Farndon and Roman fragments have been found in the churchyard and at Crewe Hill but there is no evidence of a settlement although there was a Roman tile factory over the bridge in Holt.

It is with the bridge and the present St Chad's church tower that the current visible built environment in Farndon begins. Both were built in 1338/9 AD by the monks of St Werburgh's Abbey in Chester. The bridge is a Grade I listed building and a scheduled ancient monument and the Church, where the nave dates from 669AD, is listed as Grade II. In total, there are 15 additional Grade II buildings in Farndon ranging from the Barnston War Memorial to cottages on the High Street and two table tombs in the churchyard. The centre of Farndon, mostly but not exclusively the High Street, is a designated Conservation Area and interestingly, the High Street describes a semicircle as it is built on the line of the ancient defensive ramparts.

The combination of listed buildings and the Conservation Area define Farndon as a settlement of great value and interest and this heritage is very important to the residents. It should be protected so that Farndon, set as it is in an agricultural landscape, remains essentially a rural village with ancient roots.

Farndon has a large number of heritage assets uniquely combined with high landscape qualities and topography to create a village core of high townscape value. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect these assets, promote an overall high-quality setting to sustain and enhance their significance for the enjoyment of the local community and visitors alike.

Farndon's character and local distinctiveness is due as much to the numerous small, repetitive details as it is to individual historical assets. The cumulative negative impact of small-scale out of sympathy development including extensions and window replacement can destroy the uniformity and commonality which makes the area more than a collection of individual buildings.

This revision of the Plan when reflecting the comments of residents is definite that the built environment of Farndon must not be further defined by the anodyne nature of the newly built housing estates around the village which are out of character, style and scale with the previously existing housing stock.

Farndon Parish Council commissioned the Farndon Design Code, now Policy 8 of the revised Plan, which will be strictly adhered to when planning applications are considered.

Cheshire West and Chester Council will periodically review unlisted buildings within the Conservation Area to prevent erosion of character by otherwise permitted development alterations and presently, is revising the Local Heritage List. Map 3.

### Community Consultation

The 2017 Farndon Plan reflected the considerable concern registered by residents that new development on the approaches to the village did not contribute to the established heritage of the village. Properties were '*modern estate type*' without reference to the local character standards

included in the Cheshire County Council Supplementary Planning Document 2007 section 4.2. Village consultation showed almost 100% agreed with the need to protect Farndon.

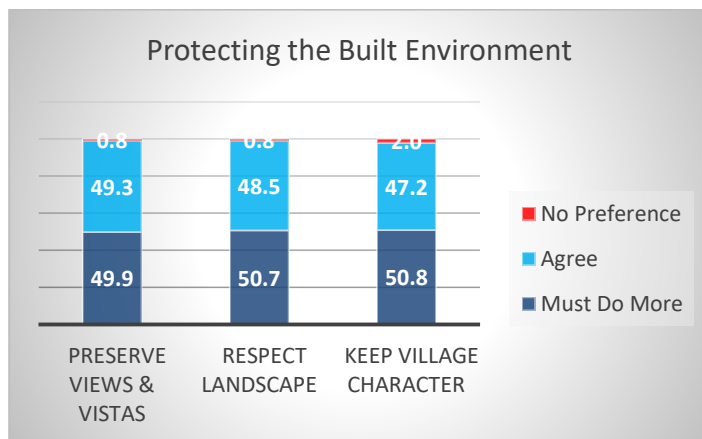
Responses to the 2021 consultation are excoriating.

Major concerns are registered about the wholly inappropriate nature of development since 2015 on four green fields – good agricultural land – of four housing estates which could be anywhere in the country and despoil all land approaches to the village. Mature hedgerows grubbed up, hundreds of houses built – out of scale, and out of sympathy – with the traditional Cheshire style of muted brick, slate roofing, cottages and houses in the small-scale layout common to Farndon.

These concerns are clearly demonstrated in the responses to the household questionnaire.

- Development must not be prominent in scale, visually dominant or significantly change the character of the village. In 2017 92% agreed – in 2021 97% agreed – increase 105%
- Not adversely affect key distinctive views into and out of Farndon with particular attention to listed buildings, open space, the Conservation Area and key landscape features. In 2017 96% agreed – in 2021 99% agreed – increase 103%
- Development in, or adjacent to any listed building or the Conservation Area, should enhance the character of that structure. In 2017 92% agreed – in 2021 98% agreed – increase 107%
- Consideration must be given to building on ‘*brownfield sites*’ before submitting plans to build on open countryside. In 2017 96% agreed – in 2021 96% agreed – no change.

In 2017 Farndon residents expressed a clear desire to conserve Farndon including buildings, views and landscape, and to ensure that it remains a rural village.



This strongly stated intention to ‘*conserve Farndon*’ has been over-ridden by the development on agricultural land of 222 houses – mostly three and four bedroomed - of a banalised housing estate style common around cities. A style which does not complement rural villages which are distinctive because they reflect their location, geography and history.

The 2021 consultation is pointed - this is not acceptable.



Cheshire West  
and Chester

### Farndon conservation area

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### Details of Policy 3 – The Built Environment

It was the intention of the 2017 Plan that new development and refurbishment of existing building should respect and enhance the local character and the built environment of Farndon and the wider areas of the parish which includes the River Dee, the flood plain and the agricultural land inside and outside the '*settlement boundary*' to the north, east and south.

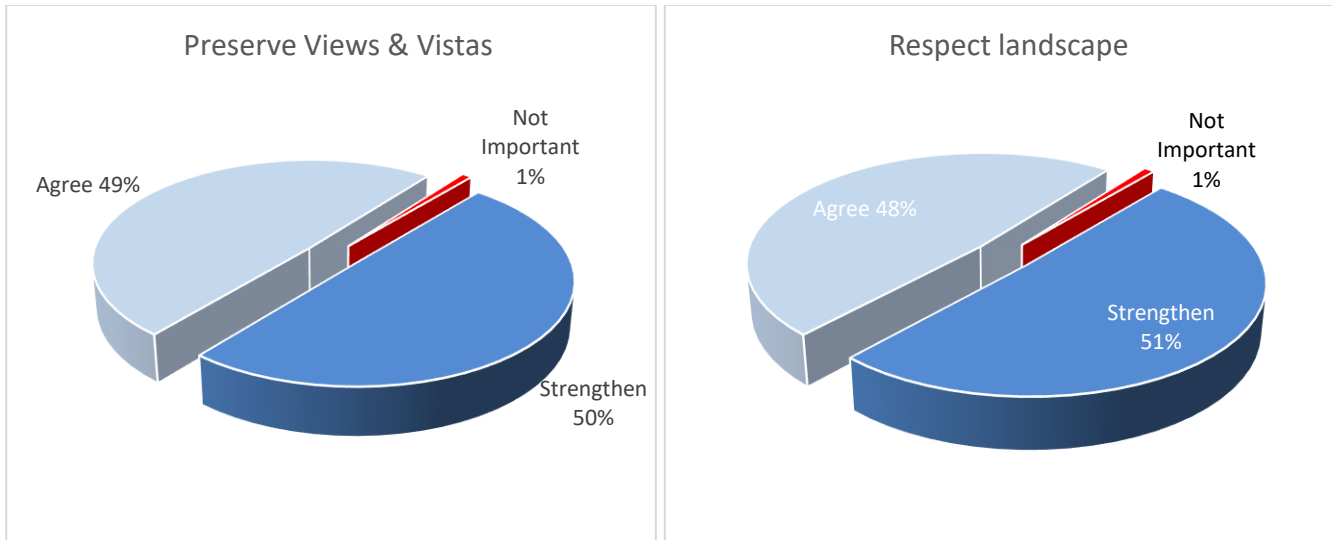
Farndon residents do not agree that this intention has been achieved when applied to the four new housing estates which now surround Farndon on three sides.

The much-valued view of the church tower when approaching Farndon from the north, has been obliterated by the rooflines of new housing – built on '*best and most versatile agricultural land*' – totally against CWaC policy EC20. The approaches to the village from the north and especially the east, are lined with rows of large houses out of scale and sympathy with the medieval village they surround. Lumpen roofs and much bright orange brick.

The overall effect has damaged the ancient and rural nature of Farndon.

#### **Policy 3.1 – New development to be low key and preserve views and vistas.**

- new development, particularly in the Conservation Area or adjacent to listed building or landmarked structures, should be low key, small scale and appropriate to the area of Old Farndon on terms of scale, mass and height; and
- a sense of enclosure should be provided based on appropriate height/width ratio, with a flexible and varied building line and road width and use of hedging; and
- development should preserve and enhance key vistas by using landmark buildings or significant landscape features as focal points; and
- edge of settlement sites – within and without the boundary - should aim to fit development into the wider landscape by appropriate and dominant landscaping and appropriate spacing between buildings.



The intention was – and remains – that vistas towards the village from: -

- the east – Landscape Character Area 9c – Tattenhall to Shocklach Plain
- the north – Landscape Character Area 11a – Grosvenor Estate
- the west – Landscape Character Area 15f – Dee Valley

are not hampered or obliterated by three storey, or the modern trend of two and a half storey, houses, which are high and steep roofed and intrude into the skyline or by '*massed*', or '*out of scale*', or '*out of sympathy*' or '*estate-style*' housing development but comply with the Landscape Character Area requirements and Policy 8 of this Plan – the Farndon Design Code.

The recent '*banalisation*' of Farndon – has challenged - but not destroyed the wishes of residents who will resist any further damage to the heritage.

**Policy 3.2 Design and layout of new developments will be required to: -**

- comply with the Farndon Design Code – Policy 8 of this revised Farndon Plan; and
- respect the local landscape and historic villagescape as recommended in Building for Life 12 Criteria numbers 5,6 and 7; and
- comply with the guidelines included in CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016 with respect to landscape management and built environment; and
- ensure that the character of the village is not significantly changed – any further.



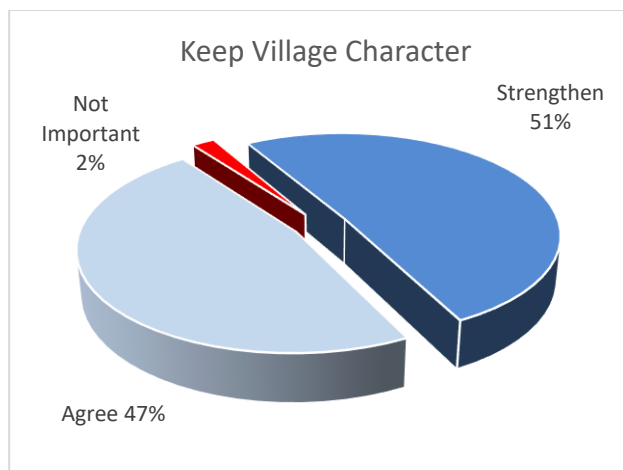
Farndon Conservation Area includes much of the High Street and numerous listed buildings are scattered throughout the village. It is important that new development – including extensions and modifications - respects and does not block or detract from the views into and out of the village, especially from the Conservation Area.

A Conservation Area Character Appraisal is prepared and updated by the Conservation Team at Cheshire West and Chester Council. Adherence to the conditions therein, will, along with the heritage legislation regarding listed buildings and their settings, be of the highest importance when planning applications for housing and commercial premises are considered.

### **Policy 3.3 Conservation Area, listed buildings and their settings**

The design of all new houses, alterations, conversions and extensions to building within or adjacent to the Conservation Area or listed buildings and their settings, should respect the distinctive heritage and character in the design, use of quality building materials in the vernacular and preservation of natural features including trees and hedgerows. Where appropriate, a positive contribution should be made to the wider public realm in terms of hard and soft landscaping and associated street lighting and furniture. Developers should comply with: -

- Conservation Area Appraisal for Farndon - Conservation Team at CWaC.
- Cheshire Local List – Local Heritage List – Built Environment Office at CWaC.
- Farndon Design Code – Policy 8 of this Plan.



Development proposals that do not contribute positively to the built environment of Farndon, to the distinctive character of the Conservation Area, to the Local Heritage List or to the Farndon Design Code or building outside the '*settlement boundary*' unless on '*brownfield land*', will not be permitted.

### **Actions for the Parish Council**

The Parish Council will work with Cheshire West and Chester Council and developers to: -

1. Secure the protection of the environmental heritage features within the village especially the Conservation Area.
2. Carefully consider any applications for housing or commercial building including extensions and modifications, to ensure that Landscape Character Area requirements are met.
3. Ensure that the requirements of the Farndon Design Code are met.
4. Ensure the integration of any new buildings within Farndon as a whole, by careful planning of roads and footpaths.

### **Supporting Legislation and Advice**

- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained - Natural Built Environmental Designations
  - Sites of Special Scientific Interest ENV 28
  - Scheduled Monuments ENV 31 and
  - Conservation Area ENV 35 to 44
- Cheshire County Council – Historic Landscape Characterisation 2007 -pages 26 and 27
- Cheshire County Council – Supplementary Planning Document 2007 – Design for Residential Development - section 4.2
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012 paragraphs 29 to 46
- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 No 637
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 numbers 5, 6 and 7
- CWaC Local Plan 2015 (Part One)
  - Strategy 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7
  - Strategy 10 and 11
- Queen's Speech and Bills 2015 page 27-29 - Housing Bill 2015 superceded by: -
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016 – Landscape Character Areas 9c, 11a and 15f
- Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017
- CWaC Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Farndon
- Cheshire Local List – Local Heritage List

## **Annexes**

- Household questionnaire – May 2021
- Farndon Neighbourhood Planning - questionnaire results – 5 July 2021
- Household questionnaires – responses by percentage
- Household questionnaires – written comments
- Farndon Conservation Area – map
- Farndon Conservation Area – CWaC Planning Portal
- Farndon Listed Buildings
- Farndon Design Code – Farndon Plan – Policy 8

# Topic 4

**Facilities for Local People**

## **Facilities for Local People—Leading to Policy 4**

### **Background**

As with many rural villages, local services have declined during the past 25 years and although most day-to-day needs can be met in either Farndon or Holt, larger items and specialist services require a journey, usually by car, to Chester, Wrexham, Liverpool or Manchester.

Retail facilities in Farndon along and off the High Street include a Post Office and pharmacy, clock repairs, a butcher combining delicatessen and general store, newsagent with shoe repair and cleaning service, designer blinds service, dog grooming, a florist with gift shop, a beauty salon, antiques and collectables, a physiotherapist, interior design, a photographer and hairdressers. Also, on the High Street are two public houses, a coffee shop and at Top Farm a restaurant and antique shop.

As Farndon expanded public services came under increasing pressure. Farndon Village Surgeries Group merged with Tattenhall surgery to accommodate an increasing number of patients. The primary school expanded with an in-house pre-school facility and six new classrooms. Dandelion Nursery at Monument Place also accommodates pre-school children.

Farndon itself has two churches, St Chad's, Church of England and the United Reform Church at Rock Chapel and the hamlet of Crewe-by-Farndon has a well-attended Methodist Chapel. The Memorial Hall opposite St Chad's hosts a wide range of activities from yoga sessions and badminton to meetings of the Women's Institute and Parish Council, the mobile library parks there and the Hall serves as a Polling Station. Farndon Community Trust manages the Community Club at the east end of the village and offers a wide range of facilities including a bowling green, a playing field, a multi-use games area, a skateboard park, a children's play area, a bar and social events hall. A car boot sale is held on most Bank Holidays.

Some years ago a number of fishing pegs were built into the riverbank which the Environment Agency plans to refurbish. Fishing licenses are available on-line. The river bank to the south of the bridge as far as the boardwalk is '*common land*' and maintained by the Council. The public toilets on the riverbank are owned and managed by Cheshire West and Chester Council

The New Homes Bonus designed to assist with increased pressures associated with new development has been withdrawn by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

### **Community Consultation**

Concerns about retaining village services and the ever-increasing pressure on existing facilities were clearly expressed by residents as follows:

- Support and retain existing facilities - the primary school, surgery, churches, chapel and community buildings – 97% agreed in 2017 falling slightly to 96.3% in 2021
- Improve existing recreational facilities - 91% agreed in 2017 rising to 96.3% in 2021
- Stop change of use – 92% in 2017 increased to 96.3% in 2021

## Details of Policy 4 - Facilities for local people

The Parish Council recognises that there is a need for local facilities and services to be protected wherever possible so that the needs of the existing and future population of the village and surrounding areas are met. Now that the school has expanded there has been no identified need for increased physical facilities.

Responses to the household questionnaire suggests that the majority of residents are less concerned than in 2017, that facilities are improved and expanded. The availability of reasonable wi-fi makes working from home more realistic and environmentally friendly, and, other than a suggestion that a larger grocery shop would be useful there is no support for additional shops, possibly because the internet makes home deliveries an easy and timesaving option. Additional employment opportunities would be welcome (Policy 1) to provide work for the existing population rather than expand it.

Add to that, the clear absence of any support for encouraging tourism – residents having experienced first-hand a massively increased use of the riverbank during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Residents are more concerned that increasing facilities could act as a '*lure*' and have the unintended consequence of encouraging further development and, inevitably, the steady – and unwanted – drift - towards Farndon becoming a town.

The two policies on facilities included in the 2017 Farndon Plan have been retained in this revision and are adapted to reflect the views of residents.

### **Policy 4.1 Provision of facilities and services**

Provision of facilities and services within and without the defined '*settlement boundary*' will: -

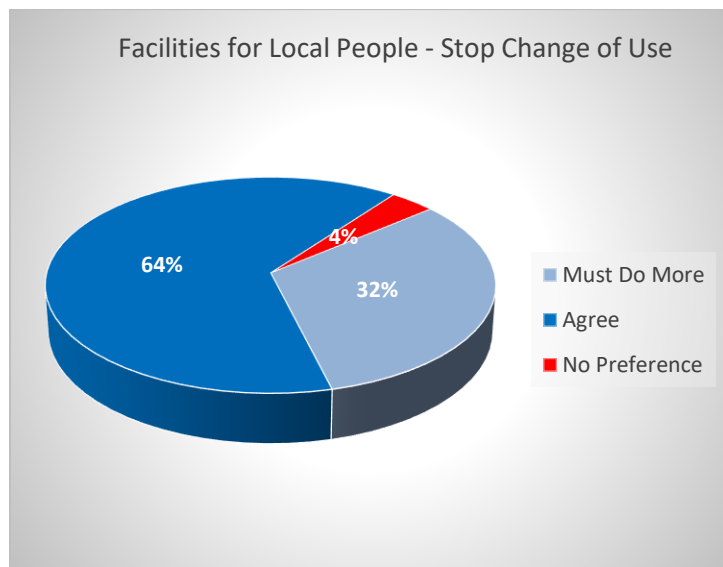
- be supported - subject to the demonstrated need of the existing population respecting residential amenity and local character and is on '*previously developed*' land; and
- be resisted - if the underlying rationale suggests a possible future justification for any new residential or industrial development.

Residents are increasingly concerned about the consequences of the completion of four major housing estates built on the edge of Farndon during the four years from 2015 resulting in – as they have – at least an additional 400 cars in a small village with only two narrow village roads.

Shops and the surgery and pharmacist are located on the High Street, and the school, nursery and Monument Place employment facility, are along the Chester Road. Consequently, all traffic into and through the village moves along one, or both of these two routes. The village streets are congested – parking to enter shops is difficult throughout the day and more so at school times with limited parking near the school exacerbates the problem and there is little scope to address these issues.

#### Policy 4.2 Change of use or redevelopment

- Of community facilities and services – will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal includes alternative provision, in a suitable location, of equivalent or enhanced facilities which is safely accessible to all and has adequate car parking.
- Of private facilities – subject to identified need, the Farndon Design Code and planning regulations.



Historically, businesses along the High Street have closed initially as a consequence of reduced footfall, local congestion and sparse parking and subsequently, due to changing shopping habits.

Proposals that do not positively contribute to Farndon will be resisted. Local businesses have expressed the opinion that further extension of parking prohibitions would have a detrimental effect on business and might affect their viability.

#### Actions for the Parish Council

The Parish Council will ensure that: -

1. The riverbank is protected; and
2. Main stream public facilities are retained as far as possible; and
3. Proposals involving '*change of use*' meet requirements of this Plan and the local council; and
4. Developments which could be interpreted as a '*lure*' to facilitate further development will not be supported.

## **Current Facilities**

- Parish Church of St Chad's - Farndon
- United Reform Church – Farndon
- Methodist Church – Crewe-by-Farndon
- Barnston Meadow – green burial ground
- Brewery Motors
- Coffee Shop and Gifts
- Doctors Surgery
- Farndon Community Club
- Memorial Hall
- Nursery School, Primary School
- Pharmacy and Post Office
- Public Houses – the Hare and the Raven
- Restaurant – at Top Farm
- Retail - Antiques and Collectables, Architect, a Beauty Salon, Butchers and Deli, Clock Repair, Designer Blinds, Dog Grooming, Florist, Hairdressing, Newsagent and Dry Cleaning, Office Services, Photographer, Physiotherapist.

## **Supporting Legislation and Advice**

- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained - Village Shops RET 12 and 13
- CWaC Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan 2011
- CWaC Preferred Policy Option (Key Service Centre) 2011 PDO4
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012:
  - Achieving Sustainable Development - paragraphs 6 to 10
  - Deliver Facilities – paragraph 70
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 numbers 1,2 and 11
- CWaC Local Plan 2015 (Part One) – strategy 8 and 11
- The Town and Country Planning (DMP) (England) Order 2015 section 5.2
- Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017

## **Annexes**

- Household Questionnaire - May 2021
- Farndon Neighbourhood Planning – questionnaire results – 5 July 2021
- Household questionnaires – response by percentage
- Household questionnaires – written comments.



# Topic 5

**Transport and Communication**

## Transport and Communication—Leading to Policy 5

### Background

Farndon developed about 2,000 years ago at the point where a ford across the River Dee enabled the passage of east-west traffic from North Wales to Cheshire and the Midlands. About a mile east of Farndon at Kings Marsh this road, now the A 534, intersected with Watling Street the north-south Roman road from Wroxeter to Chester. This stretch of Watling Street is part of Bishop Bennet Way, a public footpath and bridleway.

Originally the A534 went through Farndon over the 14<sup>th</sup> century bridge a scheduled monument, and up the High Street, but due to damage to the bridge by increasingly heavy traffic the village was bypassed in 1986. The High Street rejoins the main road about a mile east of the village. In the centre of the village a T junction leads north to Chester along the B5130.

It was anticipated that Farndon would become a typical '*sleepy village*' but that did not prove to be the case. Despite the A534 bypass, traffic continues to be a problem in the village and whilst most heavy east-west traffic bypasses, local traffic does not and much of the west-north traffic uses the bridge. Farndon is the only public crossing of the Dee in Cheshire, south of Chester.

The tight juxtaposition of the village junction results in a heavy traffic flow during peak hours with vehicles moving north towards Chester from Holt, local traffic on the '*school run*' from the wider area in all directions – Wrexham, Holt and Rossett to the west, Clutton to the east, Churton to the north and Shocklach to the south - to the primary school 100 yards north of the High Street junction and the pre-school nursery is a further 400 yards. School buses go to and from the secondary school in Malpas. Cycling, particularly at '*school time*', is a dangerous activity.

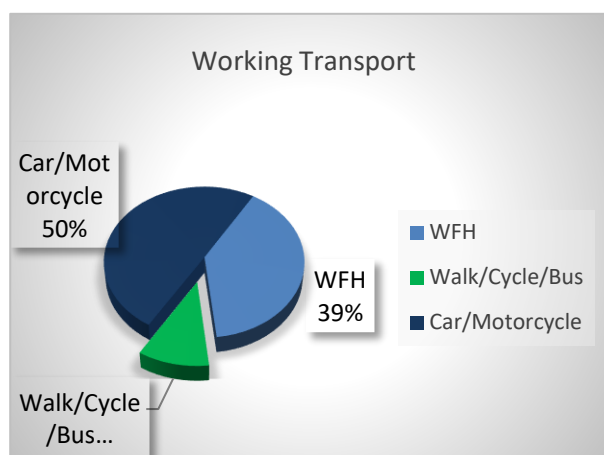
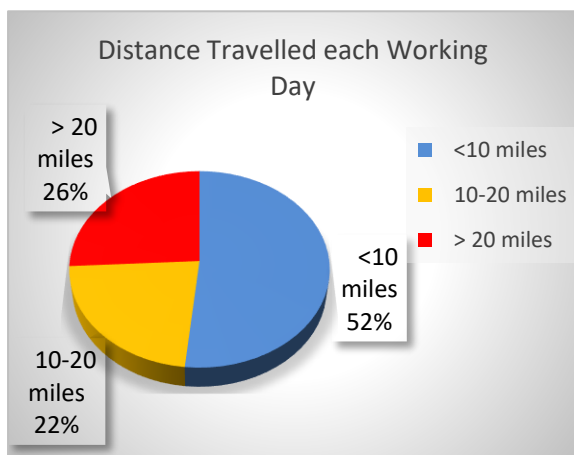
Congestion is of particular concern at peak times and during normal shopping hours due to the absence of dedicated parking areas near the school, local residential on-street parking and the narrowness of the village roads. There are two car parks, one at Top Farm for use by people working in the adjacent commercial premises and the other at the Memorial Hall, 200 yards south of the High Street, opposite the Church, out-of-the-way and far from the school.

240 new houses have been built since 2010, of which 220 since 2015, meaning at least 400 additional cars - often used twice daily – bringing additional congestion and competition for parking space.

A more adequate network of footpaths linking existing and all new housing developments with the village centre and the school would be helpful, but only if well maintained, as they would pass through or close to agricultural land.

Public transport has improved since the 2017 Plan with eight buses a day on weekdays and Saturdays on the C5 Wrexham to Chester route via Chester Station and vice versa. Most people – 80%- rely on private cars for almost all journeys, adding to the congestion.

Until recently, broadband connections in Farndon were slow but during spring 2015, Superfast Broadband (fibre) was brought to the village by Connecting Cheshire although speeds are well below anticipated levels. Mobile signals remain erratic with poor coverage in many places.



## Community Consultation

Consultation and feedback clearly demonstrated that residents are very concerned that: -

- Developers – including for a single dwelling - must realistically identify the additional level of traffic the development will generate and how it will be managed – 98% agreed in 2017 increased slightly to 99.4% in 2021.
- Pedestrians and cyclists - must be catered for in all applications – 96% agreed in 2017 slightly increased to 96.4% in 2021

Other issues raised as concerns include the need for further traffic calming measures, improved parking facilities in the centre of the village and improvement to mobile phone connection.

## Details of Policy 5 – Transport and Communication

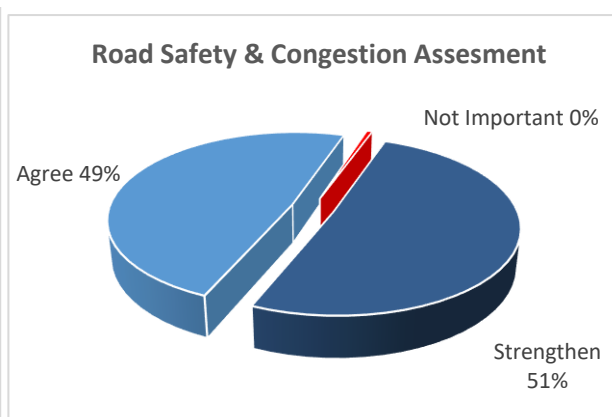
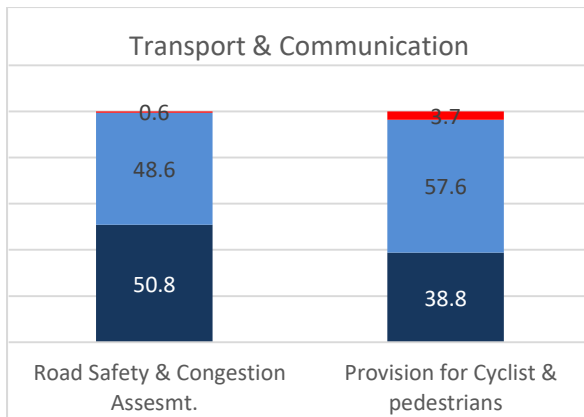
The increase in the provision of public transport between Wrexham, Farndon, Chester Station, Chester and vice versa, has been welcomed by residents as city shopping and travel more widely across the county and country is more convenient and less polluting.

### Policy 5.1 Road Safety and congestion

In all planning applications applicants should: -

- include a traffic impact assessment for the roads within and around the village, especially at peak times; and
- incorporate steps to mitigate any harmful effects and timetable to deliver that mitigation.

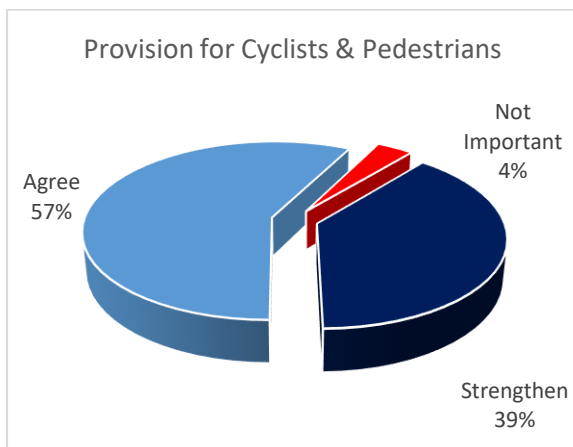
Development where levels of traffic would cause severe danger which could not be ameliorated will not be approved.



Safe walking routes to school and the centre of the village are a requirement, as is conformity with the relevant Building for Life 12 Criteria.

### Policy 5.2 Pedestrians and cyclists

- Where appropriate new development must include provision for safe, wide, smooth surfaced and direct footpaths and cycle routes from the development into the village centre and school.
- If appropriate and wherever possible, the new footpaths should link with the existing network of public footpaths which should be enhanced by the developer to provide safe passage.



### Actions for the Parish Council

1. Developments on roads where no pavements or footpaths exist will be the subject of discussions between the Parish Council, developers and planners.
2. The Parish Council will continue to monitor the effectiveness of speed limits, speed humps and other traffic calming measures in and around the village.

### **Supporting Legislation and Advice**

- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained - Planning for Community Safety (January 2005) paragraph 7.2
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012 paragraphs 29 to 46
- CWaC Local Plan 2015 (Part One) – strategy 10 and 11
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 numbers 1, 3, 7, 8, 9 and 10
- Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017

### **Annexes**

- Household Questionnaire – May 2021
- Farndon Neighbourhood Planning – questionnaire results – 5 July 2021
- Household questionnaires – responses by percentage
- Household questionnaires – written comments
- Ordinance Survey Landranger Map sheet 117 – Public Footpaths

# Topic 6

**Landscape and Environment**

## Landscape and Environment - Leading to Policy 6

### Background

Farndon is a small rural parish, surrounded on three sides by agricultural land and on the fourth by the River Dee where it forms the national boundary with Wales and flows between the flood plain to the west and a Triassic sandstone cliff to the east designated by Natural England as the Dee Cliffs Farndon Site of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I). It is one of seven geological S.S.S.I sites in Cheshire.

Agriculture is, and has been for centuries, the primary use of land in the Farndon Parish and wider district with characteristically large dairy farms interspersed with fields of arable, grain and fodder crops. Most of the land in the parish is classified as Grade 2 and 3 and some to the north of the village is '*best and most versatile agricultural land*'.

The landscape is typical of the Cheshire plain with gently rolling open fields, high tree filled hedgerow and small copses. All of these provide habitat and protective areas for a variety of wildlife from brown hares, rabbits, foxes and badgers to a large bird population, migratory and otherwise, including Canada geese, swallows, swifts, finches, woodpeckers, great and blue tits and owls. Along the river are swans, mallard ducks, herons, sand-martins, kingfishers and snipe and in the ditches, great-crested newts.

Farndon is located at the point where a ford across the Dee enabled east - west traffic between the Cheshire salt works and North Wales and on occasions, armies. The bridge, now a Grade I listed monument, was built in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. And, because Farndon was '*on the way to somewhere else*' the settlement remained small until the 1960s when housing was built on a few fields close to the village. The farmhouses and outbuildings of the three working farms within the village boundary were converted to housing or small commercial use.

As a consequence, there are few local green spaces within the village itself and residents rely for informal recreation on the riverbank which is in part, common land and on the network of footpaths which run through the fields to the north, south and east.







## Community Consultation

The consultations for the 2017 Farndon Plan showed how important the protection of the Farndon landscape and environment was to residents.

Responses to the 2021 household questionnaire with additional comments, illustrate the depth of despair that the development of agricultural land adjacent to the village was approved for housing – in the case of fields to the north of Farndon – the '*best and most versatile agricultural land*' although initially refused, large-scale development was approved following an appeal by the local council to the Secretary of State.

Consequently, residents are almost 100% in favour of strengthening Policy 6, Landscape and Environment: -

- Riverside and natural heritage – not harm or impact – up from 97% to 100%
- Landscape and visual – minimise negative impact - up from 94% to 99%
- Views and vistas - preserving views and vistas - up from 96% to 99%
- Conservation – adhere to government policy on landscape and nature – up from 94% to 99%
- Wildlife corridors – enhance, maintain and create – up from 93% to 100%
- Riverside and natural heritage – enhance – down from 84 % to 54%

With the exception of a clear desire not to enhance to the riverside – the overall percentage change in the policies to strengthen environmental protections is an increase of 104%.

The feeling expressed in the comments is '*Enough is enough*'.

## Details of Policy 6 – Landscape and Environment

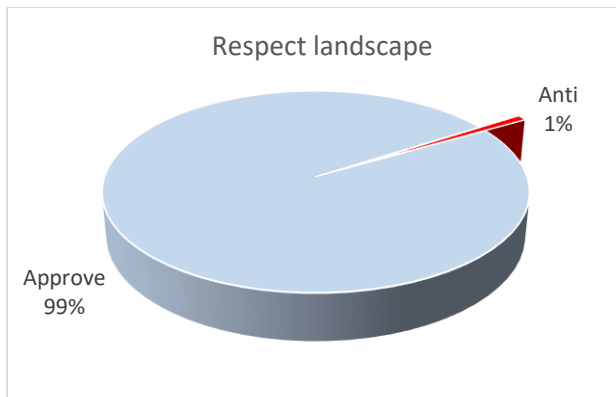
Farndon is set in a rural landscape – Map 4 - It is distinctive with the High Street rising steeply from the river to the highest point in the village at Top Farm from where the land flattens out towards the east and drops to the north.

This landscape meant that the village – historically – presented a rising silhouette when viewed from the north and the west with St Chad's church tower dominating as the highest building. And – again - historically - every field close to the village was high or medium quality agricultural land, some – to the north - the '*best and most versatile*' and all was in constant use.

No longer – the view of the church tower from the north is obliterated by the steep roofed nature of a large housing estate newly built in 2017 and four agricultural fields adjacent to the village have – since 2015 – have been covered with a total of 220 houses.

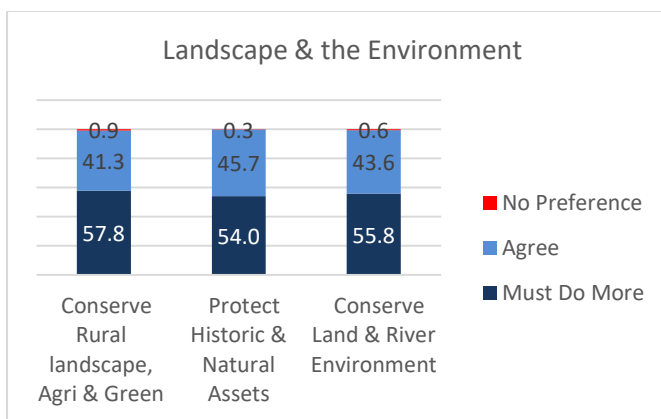
Residents of Farndon observed that the Cheshire West and Chester policy EC 20 referring to the protection of the '*best and most versatile agricultural land*' – did not prevail.

These fields and these views were very important to residents who are extremely concerned that further incursions into agricultural land, green spaces, fields and the riverbank surrounding the village are resisted. All are important to the well-being of residents in that they are recreational areas for walking, fishing, bird watching and cycling.



This was clearly expressed in the 2017 Farndon Plan when considering the impact of large housing developments on the four fields adjacent to the village with the inevitable disturbance to small animal habitat, ancient hedgerows and the destruction of agricultural land and views.

Farndon residents set a high value on the rural setting of the village, the open spaces and the River Dee, all of which define the village and residents wish to be protected and enhanced.

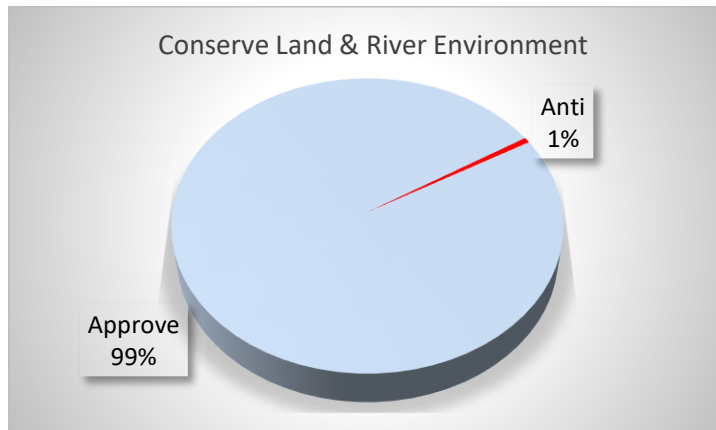


### Policy 6.1 Conserve the landscape

Developers will be required to take the following into account: -

- the location and setting of tree planting, should be designed to conserve and enhance local character, and native tree species should be planted; and
- existing mature trees and groups of trees should be retained and protected on development sites. In the case of a tree which is deemed diseased or unsafe by a registered tree specialist, a suitable replacement native tree must be planted; and
- other than to enable access to be gained to sites for development, existing hedgerows should be retained; and
- new hedges are encouraged as boundary treatments around and within all developments; and
- existing sandstone walls, including those which are part of hedgerows must be retained, repaired if necessary and kept in good order; and
- within the Conservation Area, general boundary features should be in keeping with the existing character of the immediate area and should include the conservation of existing or inclusion of new red sandstone walling and traditional black and white Cheshire railings. Suburban style garden boundaries will be resisted; and

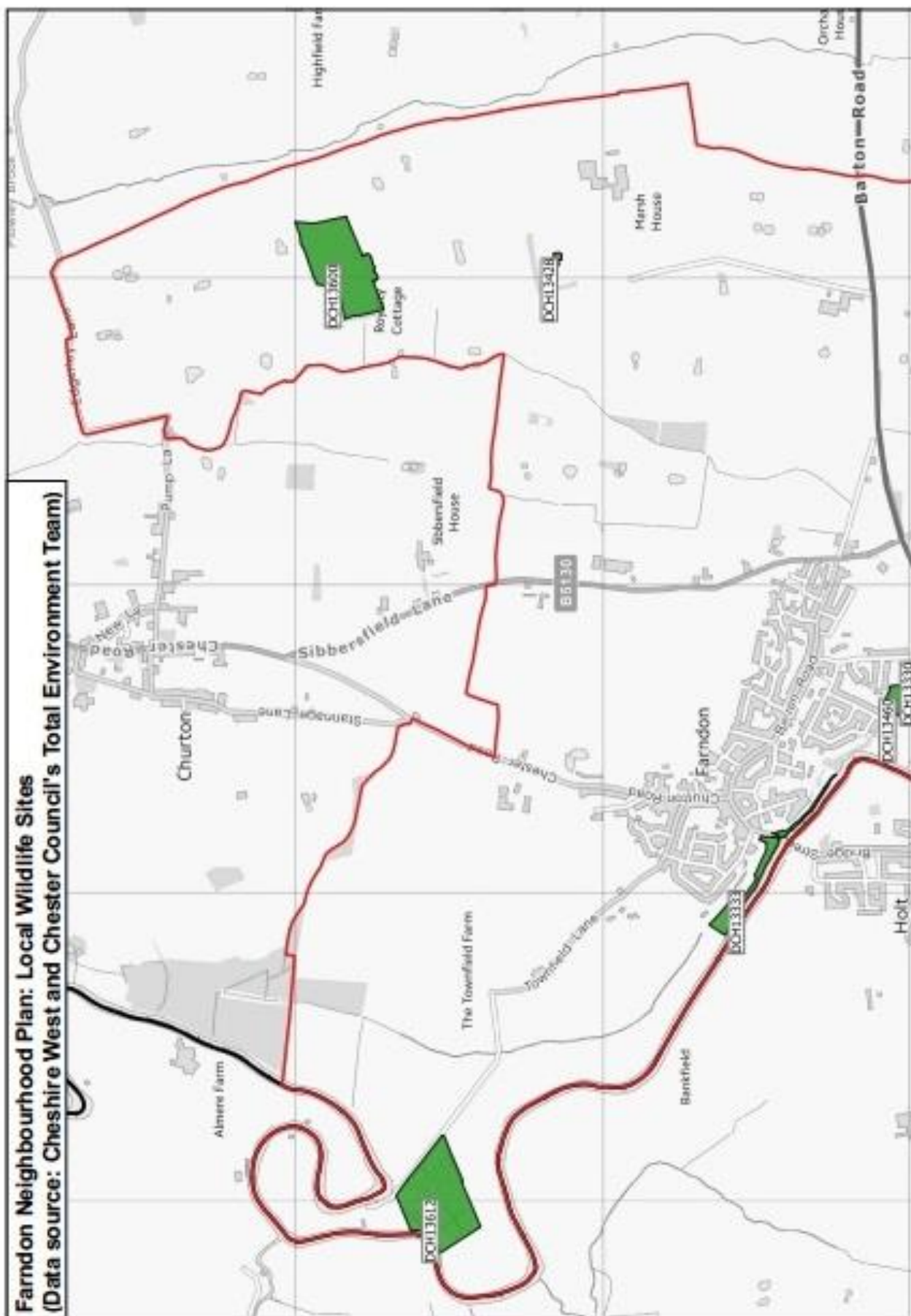
- respect, preserve and enhance the character of the local landscape – comply with 'Building for Life 12 Criteria' 5,6, and 7; and
- conform with the guidelines for built and development management – comply with landscape Character Area 15f of CWaC Landscape Strategy 2016, Dee Valley.

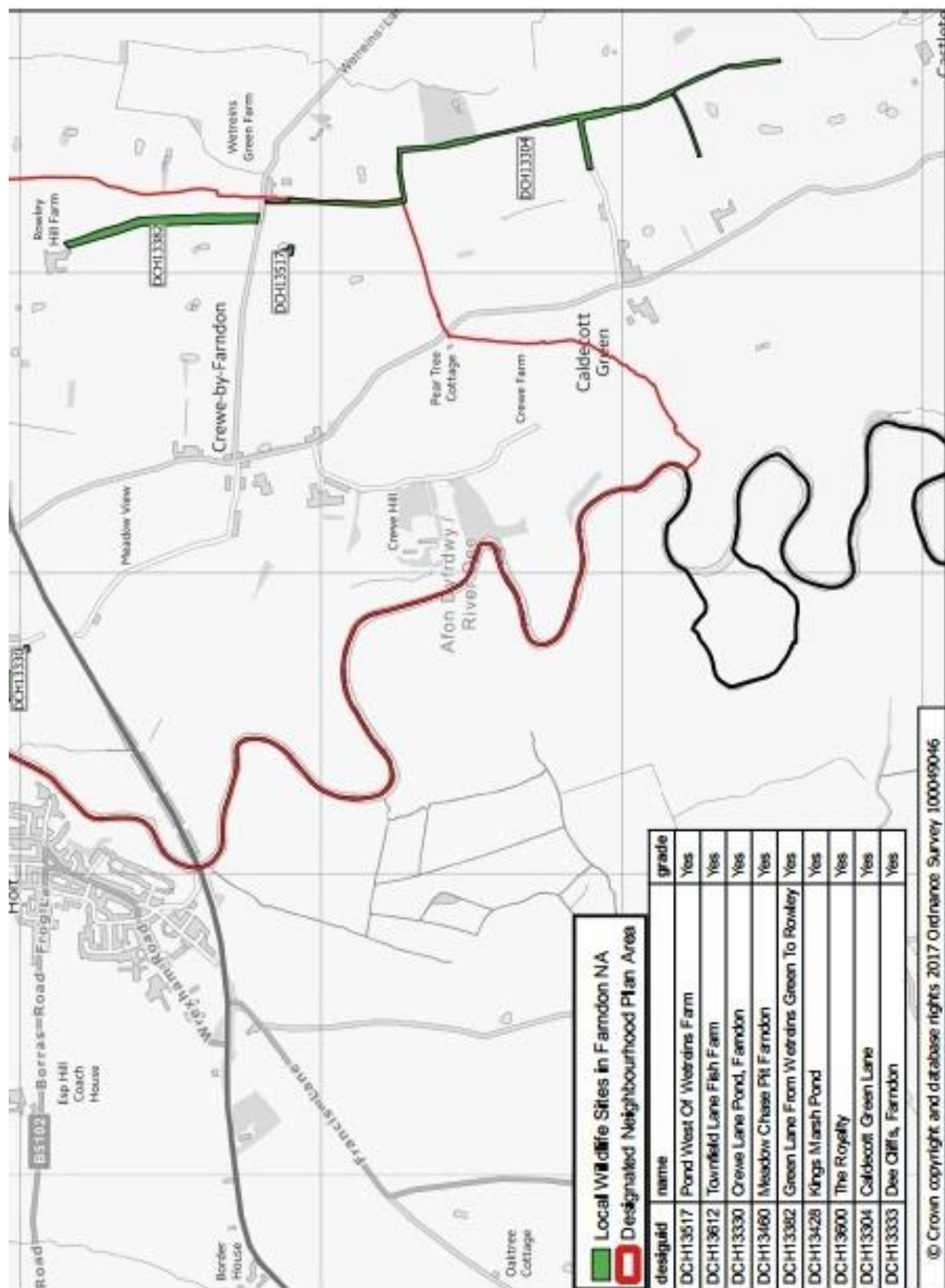


There are nine designated Local Wildlife Sites within the parish which include two marl pits Meadow Chase and Crewe Lane Pond, where the usual water species are found. Map 5.

The River Dee and nearby cliffs are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (S.S.S.I.) and the River Dee is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

These important natural features – and in the case of the S.S.S.I, unique - must be protected and conserved.

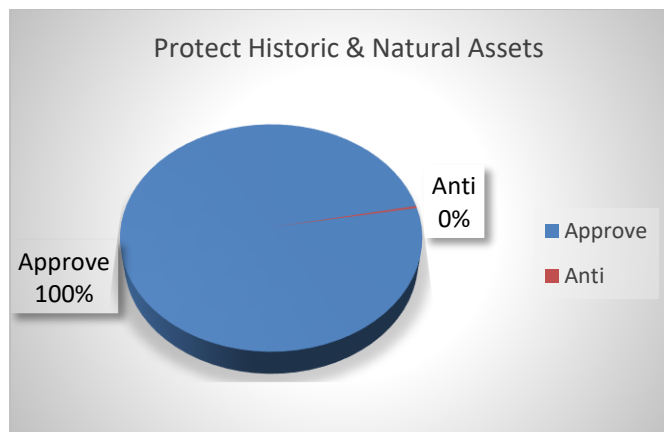




### **Policy 6.2 Protect and conserve natural assets – including wildlife, trees and hedges**

Development proposals should protect and wherever possible, enhance biodiversity and natural assets through: -

- preparation of wildlife assessments including appropriate action to conserve and enhance flora and fauna; and
- the protection of local wildlife sites; and
- retention of existing water courses and wetland features including ponds and marl pits; and
- protection of the trees within the parish covered by Tree Protection Orders and other mature or important trees or groups of trees; and
- existing hedgerows should be retained and protected from root damage by building or agricultural equipment, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Parish Council; and
- provision of green spaces and green corridors within development and the retention of mature trees and hedges along boundaries to provide safe passage for wildlife.



There are few areas within Farndon itself where residents may enjoy open green space. Some of the roads on 1960s and 1970s housing developments have wide grassed verges and mature trees, there are play areas on different estates and a playing field, a multi-use games area and a crown bowling green adjacent to Farndon Community Club at the eastern edge of the village.

There are no publicly owned green spaces in Farndon nor any Green Belt in the parish.

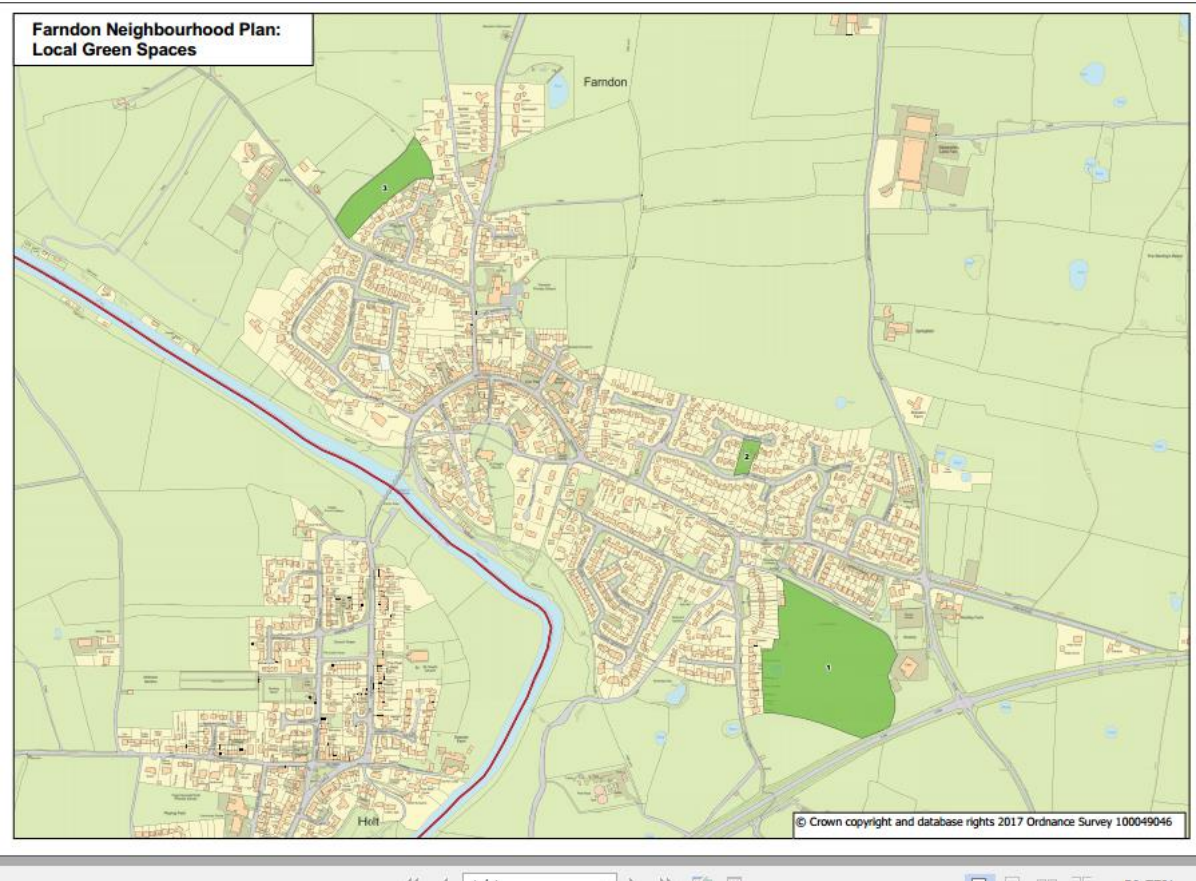


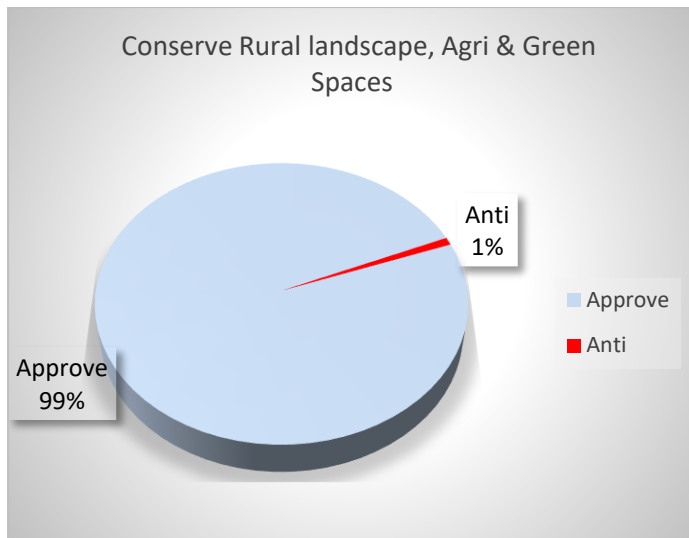
### Policy 6.3 Protect local green spaces

Local green spaces are designated at the three sites shown and will be protected from development – Map 6. They are (numbered): -

1. Farndon Community Club – the football field owned by Barnston Estates and the adjoining land from the tree line to the clubhouse, owned by the Parish Council.
2. Wimpey Estate – Limetree Drive and Nightingale Close where small plots of green verge are in the ownership of the Parish Council.
3. Townfield Lane – the lower half of the field of which Maddock's Close housing estate forms the upper half. Owned by Redrow Estates.

All landowners have been informed by letter by the Parish Council.





The justification for protecting the local green spaces at numbers 1 and 2 are that both locations are in constant use by local people and act as wildlife corridors. Both have been agreed by the landowners, Barnston Estates and the Parish Council.

The justification for protecting the local green space at number 3 is that it is designated as a nature conservation habitat on Planning Application 07/00229/FUL made on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2007 that states *'habitat area will be secured in perpetuity to ensure the transition between the development and the countryside will be guaranteed'*. Condition applied Chester City Council (2007). It is also outside the *'settlement boundary'*.

These natural assets must be protected and conserved in conjunction with policy ENV3 of CWaC Local Plan Part One, 2015.

### Actions for the Parish Council

The Parish Council will work to secure the protection of the environmental and heritage features within Farndon itself and outside the *'settlement boundary'* to maintain the rural and historical character by: -

1. Working closely with Chester Council and developers to ensure that the S.S.S.I's are respected and Cheshire Council policies on Landscape Strategies are applied.
2. Responding to planning applications in line with the Neighbourhood Plan policies.
3. Publicising planning applications and arranging public discussion sessions on planning issues affecting the parish.

### Supporting Legislation and Advice

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended Section 28
- Cheshire County Council – Dee Cliffs Farndon SSSI – geological sites
- DEFRA Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales (1998)



- Natural England Technical Information Note TIN049
- Chester District Local Plan (2006) retained - Section C, Policy EC20
- Building for Life 12 Criteria, Design Council 2012 numbers 5, 6 and 7
- National Planning Policy Framework 2012 paragraph 112
- Environment Agency, Lower Dee Policy – map
- Environment Agency, Lower Dee Policy – narrative
- CWaC Tree Preservation Orders – Farndon
- CWaC Local Plan 2015 (Part One) ENV 4
- Housing and Planning Act (2016)
- Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017
- CWaC policy EC 20 - loss of the '*best and most versatile agricultural land*'
- Report on Farndon Neighbourhood Development Plan 2010 – 2030 – 10 October 2017

## **Annexes**

- Household Questionnaire – May 2021
- Farndon Neighbourhood Planning - questionnaire results – 5 July 2021
- Household questionnaire – responses by percentage
- Household questionnaire – written comments
- Wildlife Survey
- List of Tree Preservation Orders – Farndon
- Ordinance Survey Landranger Map sheet 117 – Public Footpaths.
- Farndon Design Code 2021 – Policy 8

# Topic 7

**Sustainable Development**

## **Sustainable Development – leading to Policy 7**

### **Background**

The world has become more acutely alert to the importance of sustainable development, climate change and the environmental impacts of the almost ceaseless growth of urbanisation.

Increased and increasing awareness of the impact of pollution on air quality around schools and homes often as a direct result of large-scale housing development in villages where many residents need to use cars and motorised transport to access facilities, shops, employment and education, is being examined more closely.

The case is being made for locating housing nearer to public transport – buses and trains – and therefore closer to work opportunities and thereby reduce the environmental impact of placing large housing developments in rural areas where new houses tend to have at least two cars per household – invariably used twice a day for commuting.

Furthermore, the move from fossil fuels towards sustainable options including solar heating, heat pump technology and electric vehicles puts considerable constraints on options for home heating and transportation which are exacerbated, in rural areas, by distance.

These important issues were partially covered in the original Farndon Plan 2017 but not in any detail. Short comments were included in each of the six policies but particular reference to '*sustainability*' was not highlighted.

However, climate science has advanced greatly during recent years and in response, government and local policies have changed and tightened to reflect the science. There is now a requirement – from 2022 – to install environmentally sustainable heating and electrical charging points for sustainable transportation in all new homes and developments plus strong advice to install triple glazing, roof water harvesting and permeable car parking areas.

Add to that, the immediacy of the agreements at COP26 and associated environmental concerns including the protection of agricultural land, emphasis on tree planting, hedgerow initiatives and re-wilding.

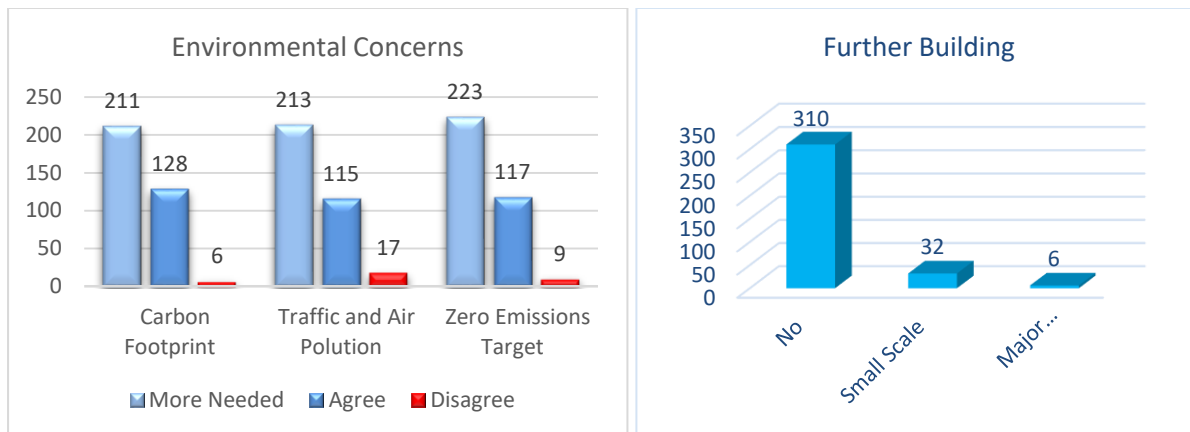
Consequently, Farndon Parish Council have decided to include a new policy in the revised Farndon Plan specifically relating to the '*sustainability of all development*' within the parish.

### **Community Consultation**

The household questionnaire distributed to each home in Farndon Parish in April/May 2021 included – '*Part 3 – New additional considerations*' – designed specifically to consult residents on their view for the need to introduce '*World Class Standards*' on carbon footprint, zero emissions, carbon neutrality, the effect of motorised traffic and the need for further housing.

Options were to support the need for world class standards, to opt for strict control or to register that the issue was not important today.

The analysis of the responses is shown below: -



## Details of Policy 7 – Sustainable Development

Housing development in Farndon between the 1960's and 2011 was more or less sustainable as many people worked close to or within the village and the population was supported by the usual facilities available in a small village of the 1,653 residents recorded in the 2011 census.

However, since 2015, the effects of building four large housing developments around the village have changed the structure and sustainability of Farndon. The consequences are well rehearsed in other sections of this revised Plan.

Responses to the 2021 household questionnaire reflect the strong and growing concerns of village residents about the need to mitigate the effects of unsustainable development, climate change and the environmental impacts of the growth of urbanisation.

The analysis of the 360 returned questionnaires demonstrated that the majority of residents by far, support the need for world class standards applicable to all development: -

- Carbon footprint constrained = 339/360 = 94.16%
- Traffic and air pollution reduced = 328/360 = 91.11%
- Zero emissions targets supported = 340/360 = 94.44%

### Policy 7.1 Sustainable development for a sustainable future

Proposals for all housing and development in Farndon Parish area must demonstrate that they meet central government and local regulations for carbon zero emissions meaning: -

- zero or minimal carbon footprint – solar panels for water heating and electricity, electric charging points for vehicles, roof water rainfall harvesting for toilets and ground source or air source heat pumps for central heating, for each individual house and development – must be installed; and
- permeable car parking areas for each residence or building – must be provided; and
- gas or oil-fired central heating systems for new development – will not be approved; and
- development of '*brownfield sites*' or '*previously used land*' – will be considered.

The population of Farndon has, historically, increased by about 150 persons – about 9% - during each recent ten-year census period up to 2011 – whereas new developments are estimated to have increased the size of Farndon by 41% during the four years beginning 2015.

This rate of development cannot be described as sustainable as required by central government legislation. Farndon residents agree. The responses to the 2021 household questionnaire which for this question was 348, are: -

- No further building supported or required –  $310/348 = 89.08\%$
- Small scale building supported =  $32/348 = 9.19\%$
- Major development supported =  $8/348 = 1.72\%$

Add to that, residents responses to the questions concerning: -

- Development within the '*settlement boundary*' only = 97%
- Development on '*brownfield land*' only = 96%

#### **Policy 7.2 Sustainable development for a sustainable parish**

Proposals for all development in Farndon Parish must demonstrate that: -

- an identified need that cannot be met by other means is confirmed; and
- development is within Farndon '*settlement boundary*'; and
- development is on '*brownfield land*' – inside and outside the '*settlement boundary*'; and
- development is not proposed for agricultural land; and
- development is small-scale of fewer than ten dwellings.

Cumulative small-scale development will not be approved.

This new policy has been included because Farndon has already been almost fully developed up to the '*settlement boundary*' and there are few areas within that boundary for further development, other than in-fill and it is necessary to ensure that any housing meets high sustainable standards.

The analysis of the household questionnaires showed that there was no identified unmet need. Neither is there a call for any further housing in the parish on which to base a proposal for a rural exception site for social or '*affordable*' or any housing.

It is also confirmed in the Examiner's Report of 2017 that there is an '*excess of 52 dwellings above the minimum requirement of 200. Accordingly, there has been no need to allocate additional land for residential development at Farndon in the CWaCLP (Part Two) or in the NDP*'. This extends the Plan for a further five years until 2035.

### **Actions for the Parish Council**

The Parish Council will work with Cheshire West and Chester Council and developers to: -

1. Take advantage of all controls at their disposal to maintain opportunities to benefit the environment.
2. Ensure that they are informed of existing and new central government and local plan strategies on planning for climate change mitigation, carbon neutral budgets and biodiversity net gain.
3. Maintain a policy of re-cycling land – '*Brownfield First*'.
4. Encourage pre-planning application meetings with developers to encourage better design, maximising clean energy and insulation with no loss of natural assets including biodiversity, tranquillity, high grade farmland, mature woodland, trees and hedgerows.

### **Supporting Legislation and Advice**

- CWaC Local Plan (Part One) – settlement pattern policies
- CWaC Local Plan (Part Two) – (no requirement for) allocation of additional land
- Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017
- Examiner's Report on Farndon Neighbourhood Plan 2010 – 2030. Date 10 October 2017
- Hedge Fund Report – CPRE 2021
- Recycling Our Land. The state of brownfield report – CPRE 2021

### **Annexes**

- Household questionnaire – May 2021 – Part 3 – New additional considerations
- Farndon Neighbourhood Planning - questionnaire results – 5 July 2021
- Household questionnaires – responses by percentage
- Household questionnaires – written comments

# Topic 8

**Design Code**

## **Design Code—Leading to Policy 8**

Farndon grew up around the church of St Chads and the High Street and was remarkably compact with a balance of shops and services meeting local needs. In the 1960's and 70's three housing estates were added. The Quarry Hill estate provided local authority funded housing; the Wimpey Estate provided private housing for the modern family and the third estate at Townfield Lane was bungalow accommodation targeted at the retiring private sector.

Each of these estates had a distinctive style and approach which resulted in harmonious visual aspects and neighbourhood relations.

This status quo was maintained by and large, for the next 50 years. Small housing developments including Rectory Close, Swallowfields, Barnston Court and Maddocks Close were specifically targeted and styled for attracting potential residents. However, these additions were mainly organic growth and did not change the nature of the village.

The 2010's dramatically changed the whole village with the building of almost 250 houses, the majority on large developments, Fernhill at Top Farm, Kings Meadow, Elan Homes and Wellington Green, adding 222 new homes to the village swelling the population by 41% in the four years from 2015.

These new estates were built in typical 2010's style, the majority targeting higher income two car owning households with young children although the mandatory '*affordable*' housing quota was included. Much of this development has the style of and "*New Town*" appearance.

### **Policy 8 – Farndon Design Code**

The Farndon Design Code is designed to restrain further development of this nature. New housing should be specific in its design and styling to offer contrast and juxtaposition to these ubiquitous oceans of three and four bedroomed houses with their open plan front gardens plus driveways with two and three cars.

New developments should above all reflect Cheshire. Built in the vernacular of Cheshire brick with Welsh slate roofing, two-storey rather than high roofed two and a half storey, gardens enclosed by hedges or traditional black and white Cheshire Railings with an emphasis on environmentally sound construction. Heat pump assisted central heating, rainwater harvesting and solar capture are all technologies that new build property must employ.

The Parish Council expect that any planning proposal should clearly state how these requirements have been addressed.

Annex - Farndon Design Code.



#### **4 Next Steps**

Neighbourhood planning regulations require a six-week consultation period at the beginning of the process which ran from 29 April 2021 to 14 June 2021. A further six-week '*Pre-submission Consultation*' is required before formal submission of the Plan to the local authority.

This second consultation period is planned for spring 2022 during which time the Plan will be publicised locally, brought to the attention of residents, local landowners, people who work in or run businesses in the parish, statutory consultation bodies, the local authority, the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England and others.

An explanatory leaflet will be delivered to each house in the parish describing how, where and when comments can be made. The Plan will be posted on the Parish Council website, be available in locations around the village and in hard copy at village '*drop-in*' events and a village meeting.

Comments will be further analysed, the Plan revised and submitted to Cheshire West and Chester Council for the mandatory six-week publicity period, the independent examination and the parish referendum.

January 2022